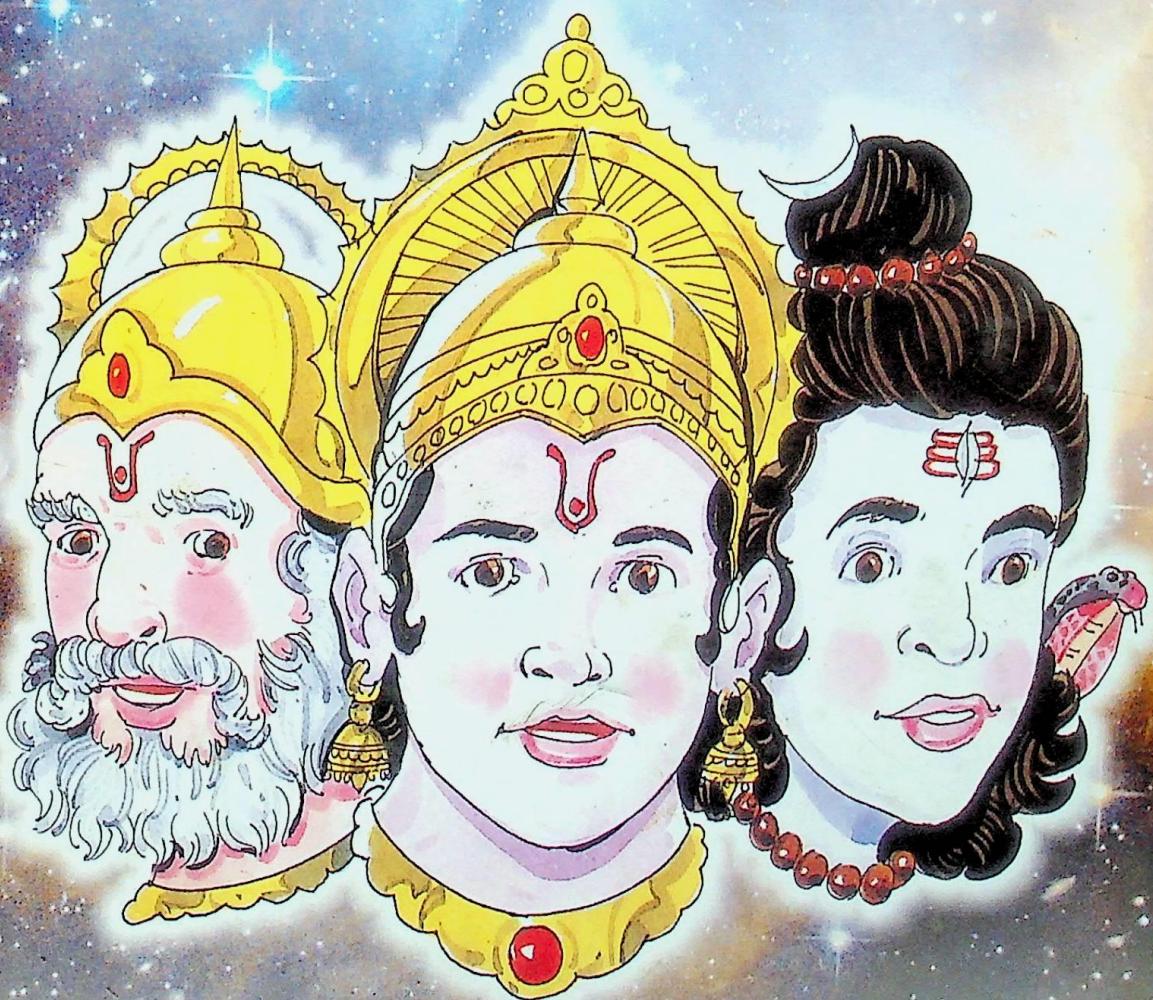


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BRAHMA VISHNU MAHESH





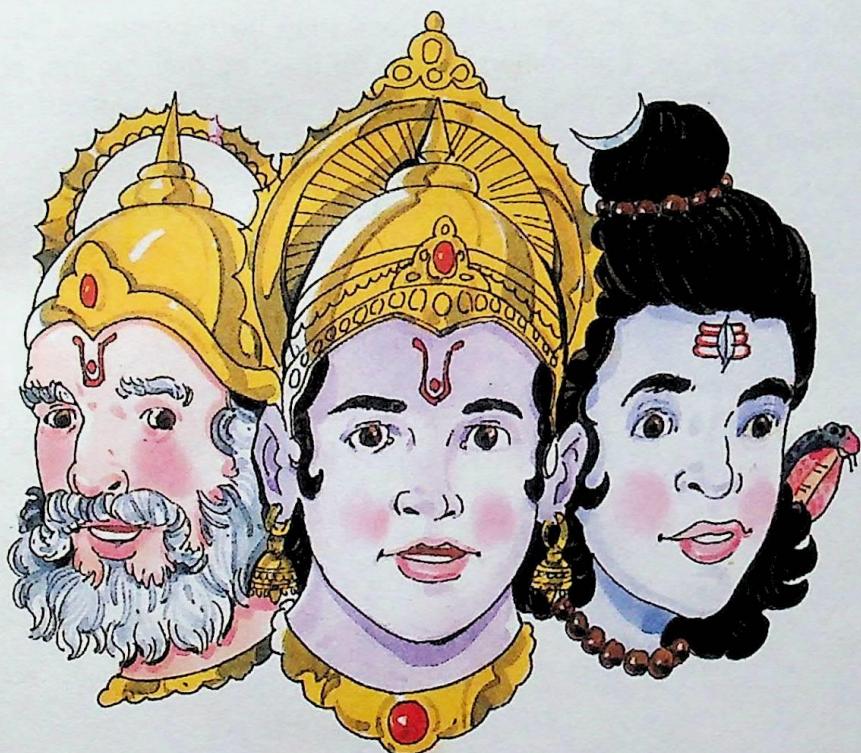
BRAHMA VISHNU MAHESH

Brahma Vishnu Mahesh is a unique collection of Hindu mythological stories. The stories revolve around the triple deity—Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

The three gods present their godly acts through the devine sage Narada, Titikshu, Bhasmasura, Atri, and the like mythological characters.

These stories are well furnished with multi-coloured beautiful pictures that will definitely give you immense pleasure while reading.

BRAHMA VISHNU MAHESHA



**TINY TOT PUBLICATIONS
INDIA**



BRAHMA VISHNU MAHESHA

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: Shri Ganeshaya Namah :

In the Creation, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Mahesha are specially mentioned. The destruction of the world has been mentioned in three ways..

LORD BRAHMA

1. **Daily dissolution:** It means that Lord Brahma goes to bed after his daily routine.
2. **Periodic dissolution:** It means the birth and death of the Creation is done by Lord Brahma.
3. **Extremist dissolution:** It means that the lord dies of old age. Also called Great Dissolution, it causes total immersion of the universe.

The age of Lord Brahma is 1000 years. His one day counts 1000 quadrages i.e., Sat, Treta, Dwapar and Kali yugas. its 1000 turns make one day of the lord. Likewise, his days and nights are counted.

About his origin, as per Shrimadbhagwad, when there is destruction of the Creation, he takes a subtle form and sits with his toe in his mouth, on the leaf of a banyan tree and rests as the following verses imply:

Karar vinde na padar vindam,

Mukhar vinde vinvesh yantam.

Vatasya patrasya putam shayanam,

Valam mukundam mansasmarami.

Meaning : We meditate upon the lord in the child-form who is resting with his toe in mouth. When he wants to play and cannot do it alone, he longs to be multiple. To satisfy the same desire, first of all, he created a lotus from his belly button. On the pericarp of it, a lotus-coloured boy was sitting. There was nothing around but dark. When he looked around, he became four-faced. The boy could not find the end

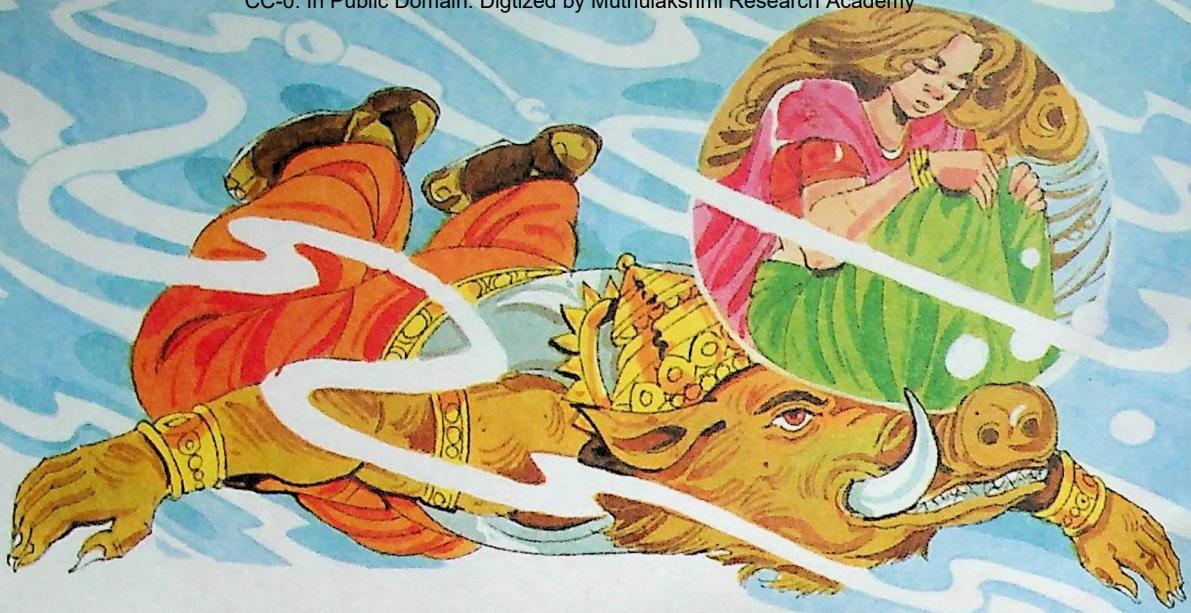




despite of descending from the stalk of the lotus for a thousands years, so he came back. Suddenly, an invisible voice asked him to carry out ascetic practice. After the ages of ascetic practice, he caught sight of Lord Vishnu in his heart.

Lord Brahma was getting immortal, but was not growing because he was not showing a disposition towards creating the universe. The first in the Creation took birth Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatkumar and Sanatan and then Narada, Vashistha, Kratu, Pulah, Chyavan, Atri, Kardam, Kashyap, Daksha, Marichi, et al. Righteousness came into being from the fore part and unrighteousness from the hind part of the lord, but the Creation could not extend itself. Then he made evident Manu from his right part and Shatroopa (woman) from the left.

Manu bore two sons—Utanpad and Priyavrat, and three daughters—Aakuli, Prasooti and Devahuti.



Utanpad had two sons—Dhruva and Uttam. Seven sons were born to Priyavrata, who ruled the seven continents. He created Varaha from his nose , who raised the Earth over water. Then Manu extended the Creation and gods, devils, humans, demigods, minstrels, demons, animals, birds, etc. were created.

At present, Lord Brahma is in his 51st year. One Manu has 71 ages. An age has 43,20,000 solar years. Thus, it has passed 6 Manus and it is the 7th Vaivasvat, the Manu's period.

Lord Brahma is always busy with the work of creation, so he can be pleased only after very hard ascetic practice. To keep the Creation in harmony and to protect the gods, he has to keep on praying to the lord who lies in the ocean of milk. He, the lord riding a swan, is always considerate towards the world. His many deeds have been described in the Puranas. He is the supreme god of the whole work production. He is known by Dhata, Srishta, Vidhata, Pitamah and the many other names.

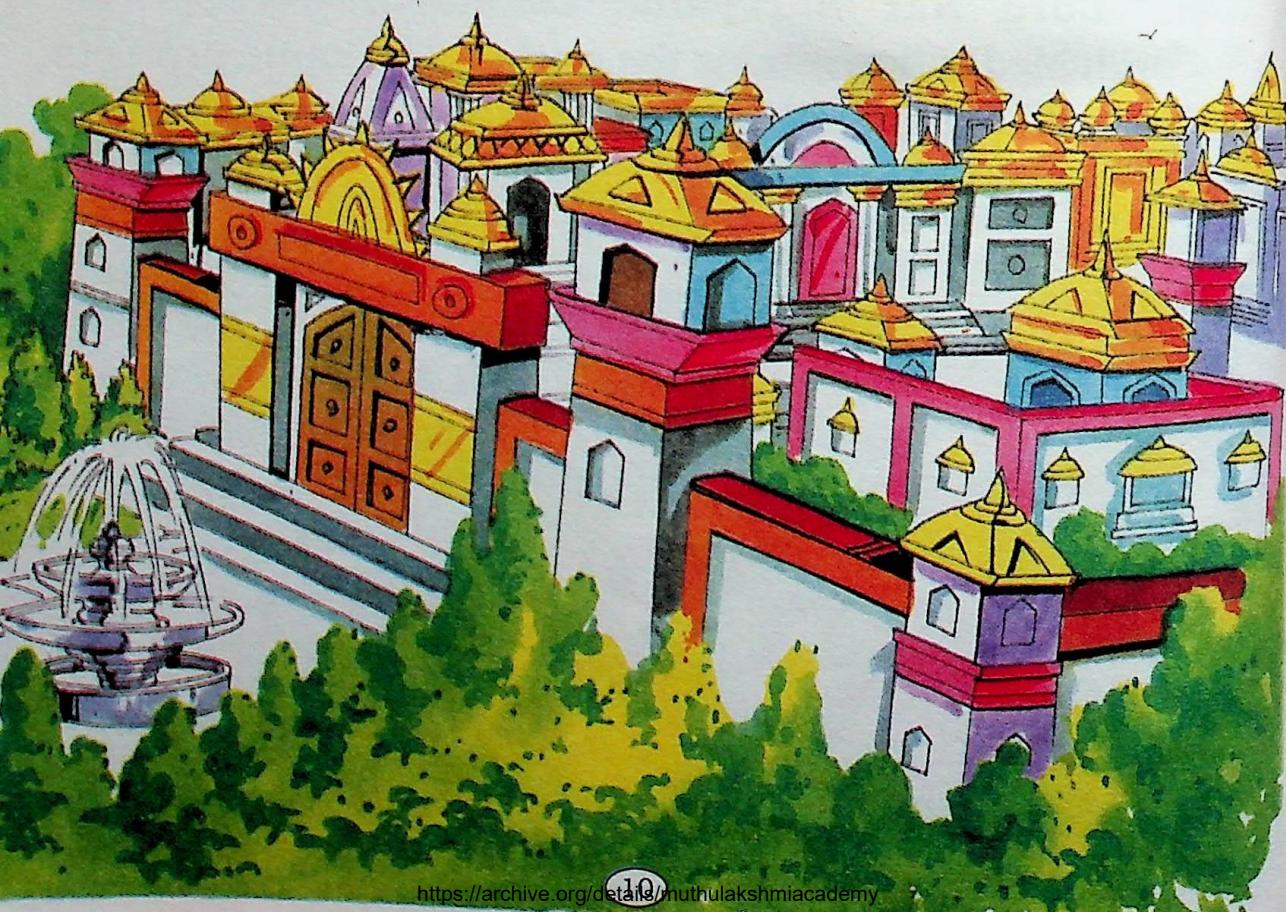
LORD VISHNU

Creating the world and the other deeds of Lord Vishnu are called exploits because he remains detached despite of acting like humans. Through the same exploits he assumed infinite forms. Out of these, the main twenty four are being described here under:

1. **Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatkumar and Sanatan:** They are the yoga-expert, Arithmetic-skilled, preceptor of scriptures and devout initiator of salvation.
2. **Lord Varah:** The boar incarnation of Vishnu came into being to raise the Earth for the extension.
3. **Lord Narada:** Narada is the incarnation of his inclination. What the graceful lord wants to do is attempted by the omniscient, the lute-player Narada.
4. **Lord Nar Narayana:** Meditation creates the world. Meditation retains the worlds. The same protects the world. So the lord incarnated in a form of meditation.



5. **Lord Kapila:** He is the initiator of Arithmetical philosophy who preached the scripture to his mother Devahuti to ameliorate her.
6. **Lord Dattatreya:** The attainment of salvation is the true aim of a human being. This is the precept of Lord Dattatreya.
7. **Lord Yajnapurush:** He made the gods strong and healthy by providing them the oblation given in a yajna. Thus, he was called yajnapurush.
8. **Lord Rishabhdev:** He is the first Tirthankar. His teachings are preached by Jain preceptors.
9. **Lord Adiraj Prithu:** He converted the Earth and gave birth to the present culture and civilization. He acknowledged the Earth as his daughter. Since then she came to be known as Prithvi.





10. **Lord Matsya:** To deliver the revelations and to keep their series pure, he incarnated in a fish form. He is the protector and founder of the world culture.

11. **Lord Kachchhap:** For churning the ocean, the gods and the demons made Mandra the mountain their churn. When it was about to sink, he incarnated as a tortoise to save it.



12. **Lord Dhanvantari:** He incarnated as Lord Dhanvantari with the nectar pot in his hand. He was known as the early preceptor of the Ayurveda.

13. **Lord Mohini:** He incarnated as a charming woman Mohini who gave nectar to the gods but an intoxicating drink to the demons.

14. **Lord Nrisingh:** To prove the unwavering devotional morale of the devotee Prahlad, he appeared from an iron pillar.



15. Lord Vaman: He confiscates everything in a spilt of a moment. He just took three-steps which measured the three worlds and sent king Bali to the underworld.

16. Lord Parshuram: Also known as Aveshavatar, he conquered the Earth twenty one times by killing the unrighteous kings like Sahasrarjuna and he established the kingdom of righteous kings.

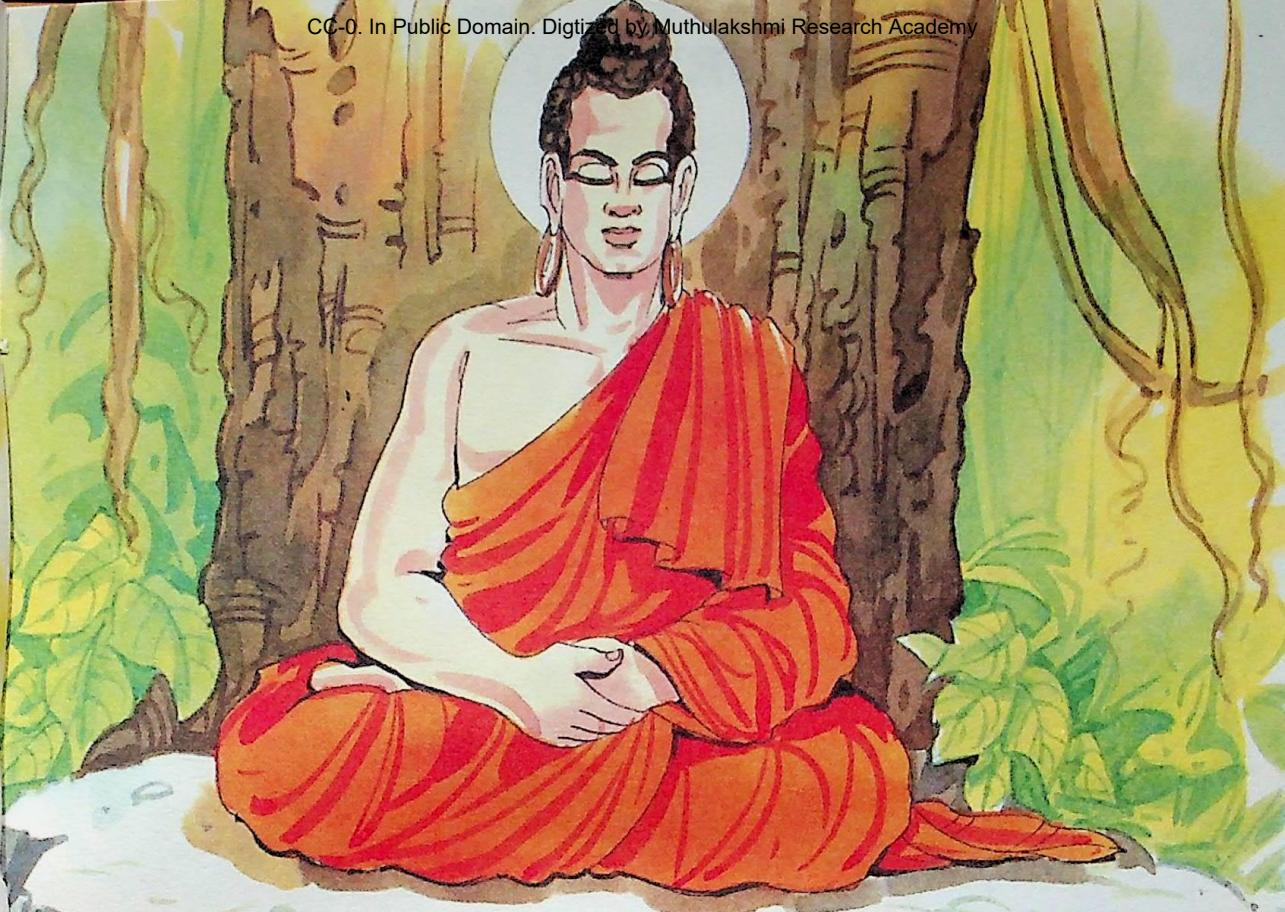
17. Lord Vedvyas: He made the rendering of the Vedas to be easily understood and improved the then form of Hindu culture to bring about its well-being.



18. **Lord Shri Rama:** There is no better word to imply good administration, good organisation, righteousness, peace, good conduct, etc. than 'Ram Rajya'. Shri Rama is the best of men.

19. **Lord Balrama:** He incarnated to take up the responsibilities of the Earth in the age of Dwapar.

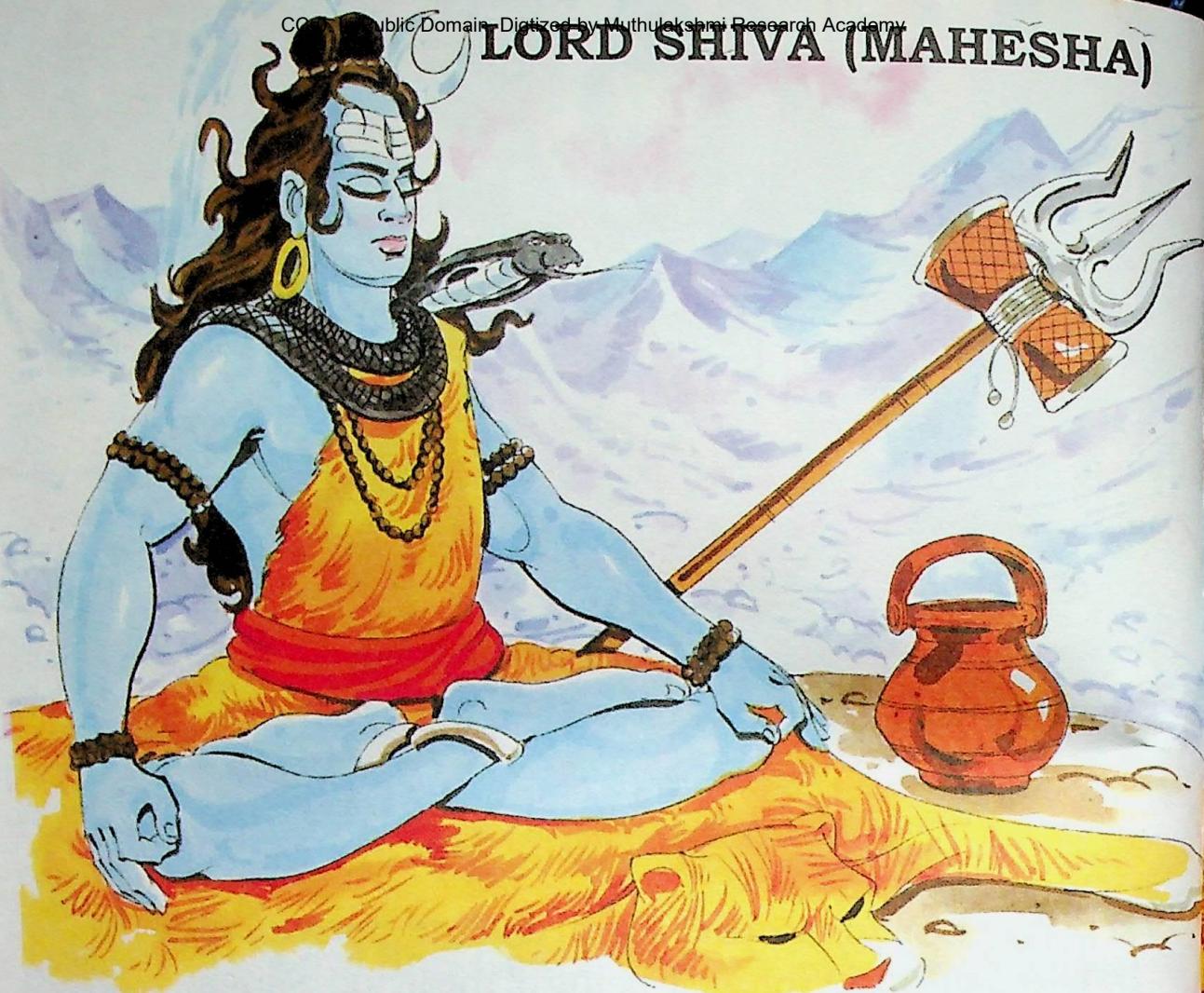
20. **Lord Shri Krishna:** This incarnation is the plenipotentiary deity. Lord Vedvyas has described Lord Krishna's divine exploits in Shrimadbhagwat. The ten merits of godliness—affluence, righteousness, fame, charm, knowledge, asceticism, sacrifice, enjoyment, love and prudence—all were present in this ultimate being. The deeds of Lord Krishna perfect all the faiths.



21. **Lord Buddha:** He preached nonviolence to bring about the well-being of the living beings.
22. **Lord Kalki:** He is said to incarnate as Kalki and destroy the evil and Kaliyug and start Satyug.
23. **Lord Hansa:** When Lord Brahma was doubtful, he incarnated as a swan and cleared his doubt.
24. **Lord Hayagreeva:** Two drops from the ocean fell on the lotus. It gave birth to two demons—Madhu and Kaitabh. To kill them he incarnated as Lord Hayagreeva and helped Lord Brahma.

Thus, Lord Vishnu incarnated in a number of forms to help his devotees and to bring about the well-being of the world. The description of these is found in every facet of Hindu culture and praised worldwide.

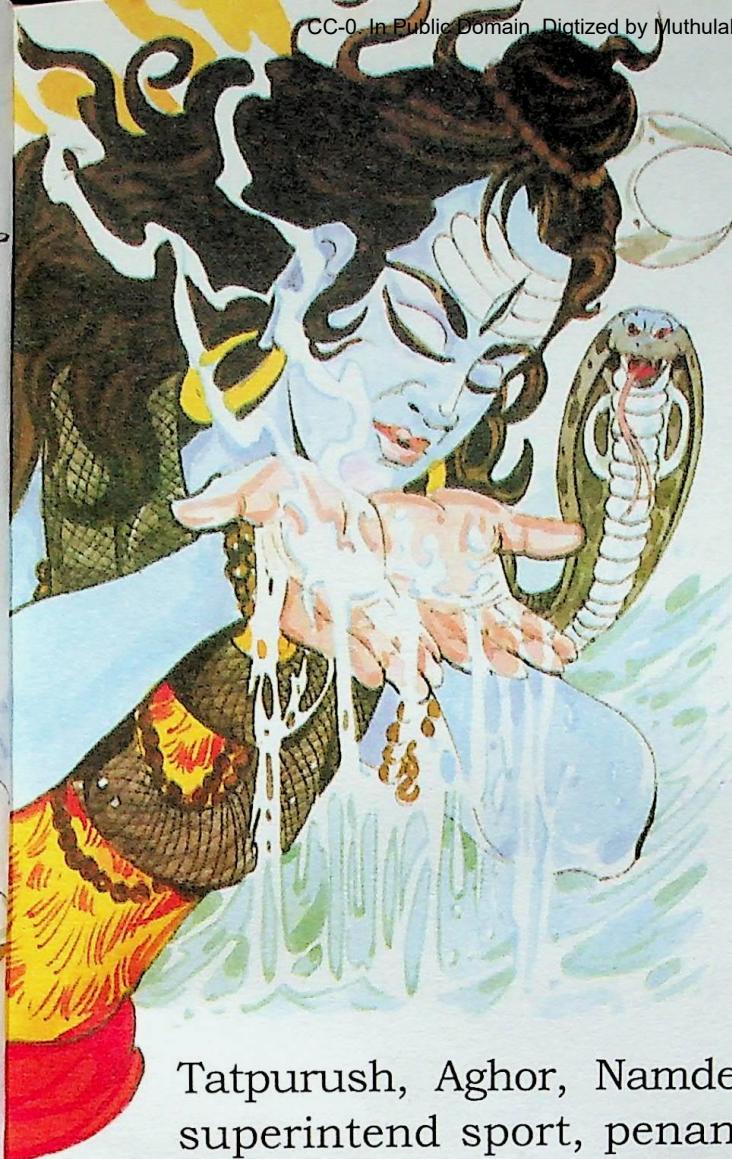
LORD SHIVA (MAHESHA)



Lord Shiva and his exploits are joy-giving, auspicious, beneficent and present in the core of all sciences. He is called Maha Maheshwara because he is a form of pure knowledge, the root cause of all, protector, foster, governor and gods' god. He is the supreme being, adorable to all, eternal, unborn, whole light-giver and who is also called Ardhanareeshwar.

He favours gods, demons and humans alike. The endless universe is but his own form. His associate female ascetics, Ganesh-Kartik and Ganesh's wives Siddhi-Riddhi, Nandi the bull, lion, mouse, peacock, attendants, Shringi, Bhringi, etc. are famous.

He was called Neelkantha as he consumed the poison



that came out of the ocean. He wore the moon, so was called Chandra-shekhar. He caught Ganga in his hair, so was called Gangadhar.

He is worshipped as the unqualified ultimate being. Devotees worship him as Jyotirling, Swayambhuling, Narvadeshwara, etc.

The description of five of his faces is known as Ishan,

Tatpurush, Aghor, Namdev and Sadyojat. They superintend sport, penance, mass destruction, ego, and knowledge-dominance. Fostering, nourishing, destroying, restraining and supporting are accomplished by these images.

His eight idols as Sharva, Bhava, Pashupati, Ishan and Mahadeva are respectively superintended in the earth, water, fire, air, sky, land, sun and moon.

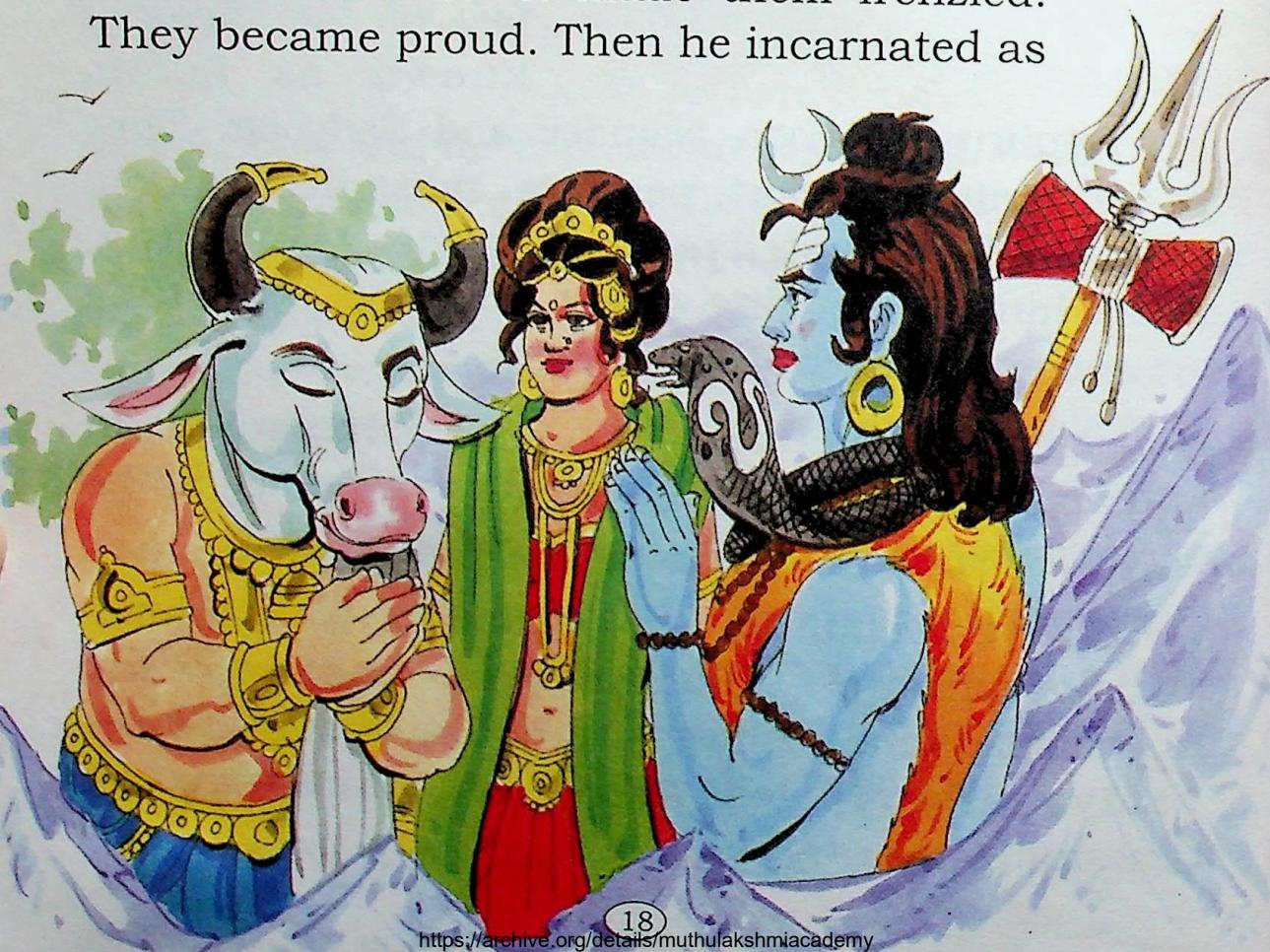
The twelve Jyotirlingas are—Somnath, Mallikarjuna, Mahakaleshwara, Omkareshwara, Kedareshwara, Bheemshankara, Vishweshwara, Trayambkeshwara, Vaidyanath, Nageshwara, Rameshwara and Dhushmeshwara.

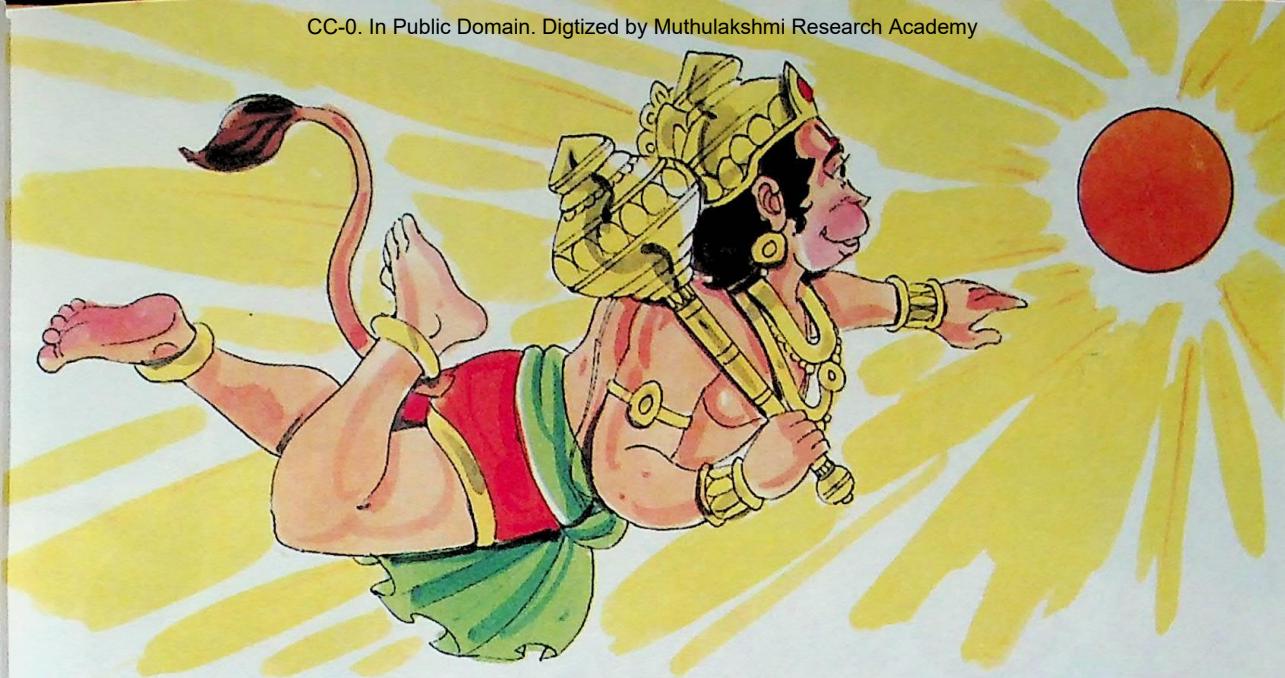
Some of his names are: Shiva, Pashupati, Mrityunjya, Trinetradhari, Kritivasa, Shitikantha, Khandaparshu, Gangadhar, Maheshwara, Rudravishnu, Pitamah, Sansarvaidya, Sarvagya, Parmatma and Kapali. The great mysteries behind these names and exploits are described in scriptures.

The Incarnation exploits: A sage named Shilad worshipped him for a son. Shiva being pleased took birth as a boy named Nandi who pleased Him with his hard meditation and became his associate.

Kalbhairav: Once there developed a dispute between Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. To end this dispute he incarnated as Kalbhairav.

Yaksha: Having consumed the nectar, the gods won over the demons. It made them frenzied. They became proud. Then he incarnated as

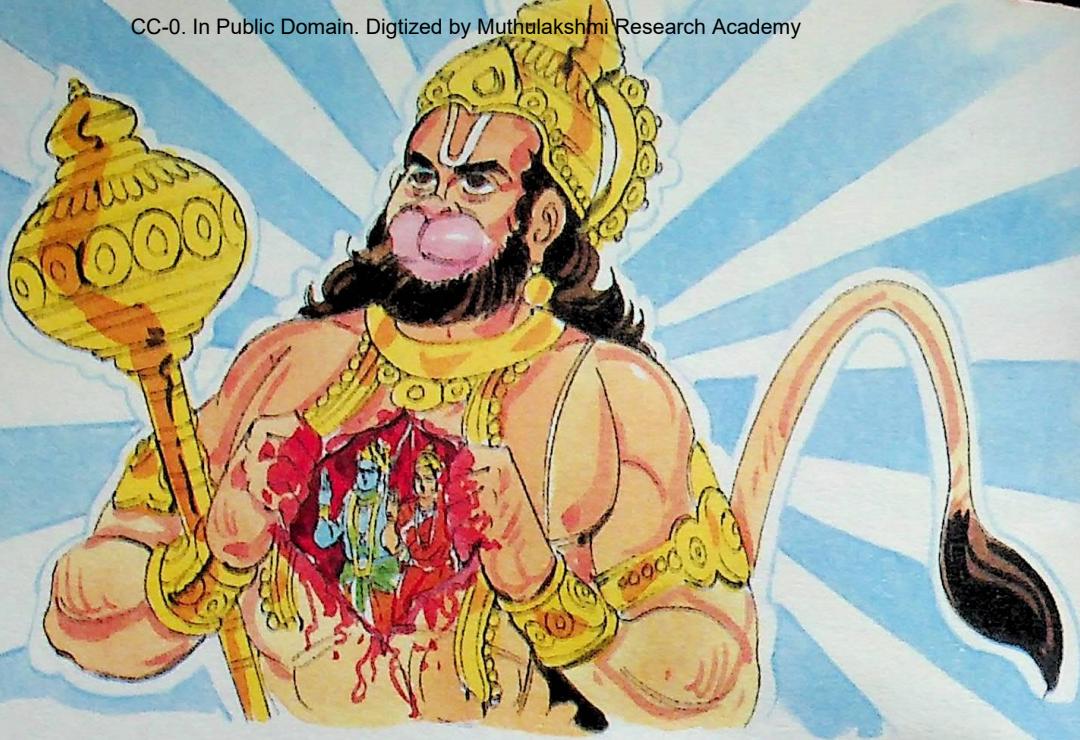




Yaksha to end their ego.

Durvasa: Atri's wife Anusuiya was loyal to him. Having pleased with their ascetic practice each of the trinity of gods granted them a boon to have a son. Out of their boons Anusuiya gave birth to Chandrama, Dattatreya and Durvasa. Durvasa's exploits have been described in many scriptures.

Hanumana: When Lord Shiva caught sight of Lord Vishnu in the form of a woman, he showered his splendour to help Lord Rama. It was made to be conceived by Anjani, the daughter of Ghautam. She gave birth to Hanumana. From the very childhood Hanumana was very naughty. Once he swallowed the rising sun as he thought it to be a fruit. He learnt all arts and skills from the Sun God. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Rama. He took the form of a monkey because the Lord was in a human form. Both the gods adore each other think of the other as their God.



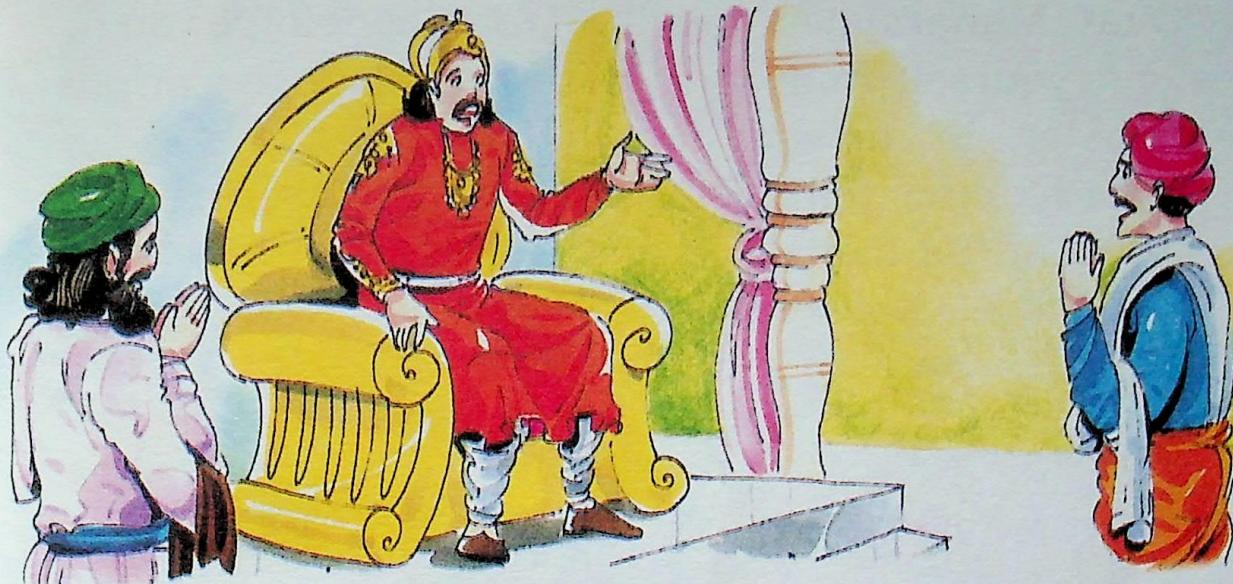
About their deeds and exploits, the Vedas say—

*Asit giri samam syat kajjalam sindhu patre;
Sur taruvar shakha lekhani patra murvi.
Likhit yadi grihitva sharda sarvakalam;
Tadapi tav gunana meesh param na yati.*

Meaning: Even if Goddess Saraswati herself makes paper of the whole land including all mountains, oceans as ink and makes pen of plants and trees, she cannot describe the deeds and exploits of them. Then how can the human brain think about it. All the scriptures conclude with the words ‘*Neti Neti*’.

Till now, we have gone through a lot about the trinity of lords—Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva (Mahesha) that included their origin as well as their incarnations and deeds. In the following pages, we will read the mythological stories related to these three lords.

GOD VISHNU SALVAGED THE DEVOTEE



In ancient times, there reigned a king named Indradyumna. He was very polite, kind, just, and devout. He had great faith in Lord Vishnu. The people were happy in his reign.

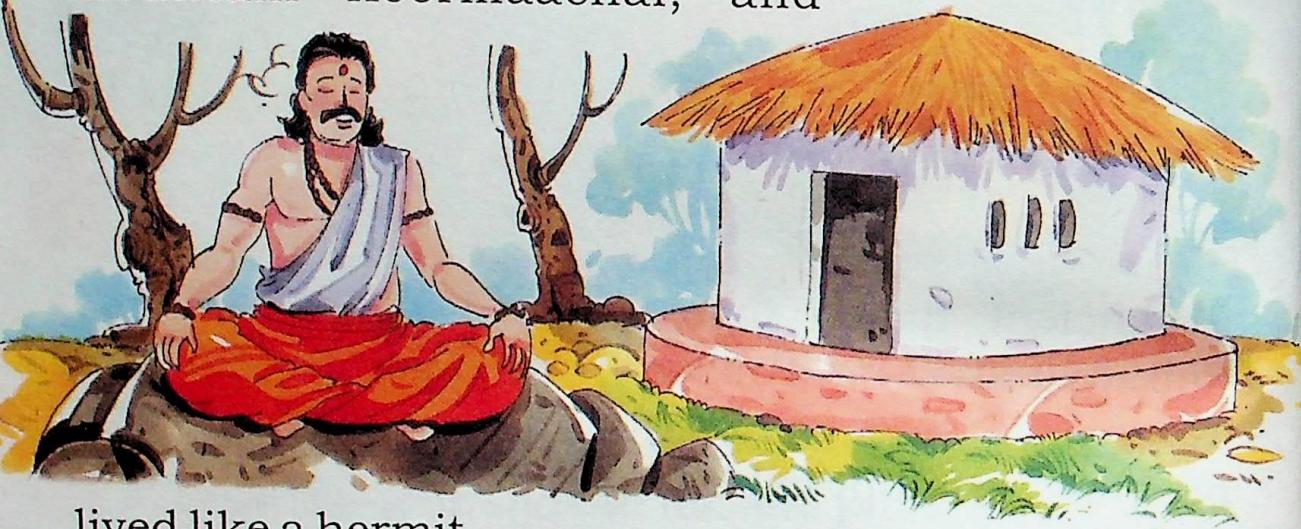
One day Indradyumna was sitting in his court. He said to his ministers, "Now I have no interest in state affairs. I have decided to go to the forest and to worship the God."

The king's decision was followed by a pin drop silence in the court. His prime minister broke the silence and said, "Maharaja, what are you saying? We will be orphaned without you. Who will rule the state after you?"

Everyone agreed with the prime minister. Indradyumna pacified everyone, "Please, be quiet. I know you have a great affection for me. Also, I know that you all together can maintain the affairs of the state very well. You all are intelligent and wise. So, don't waylay me. It is impossible for me to retreat

myself from my decision.”

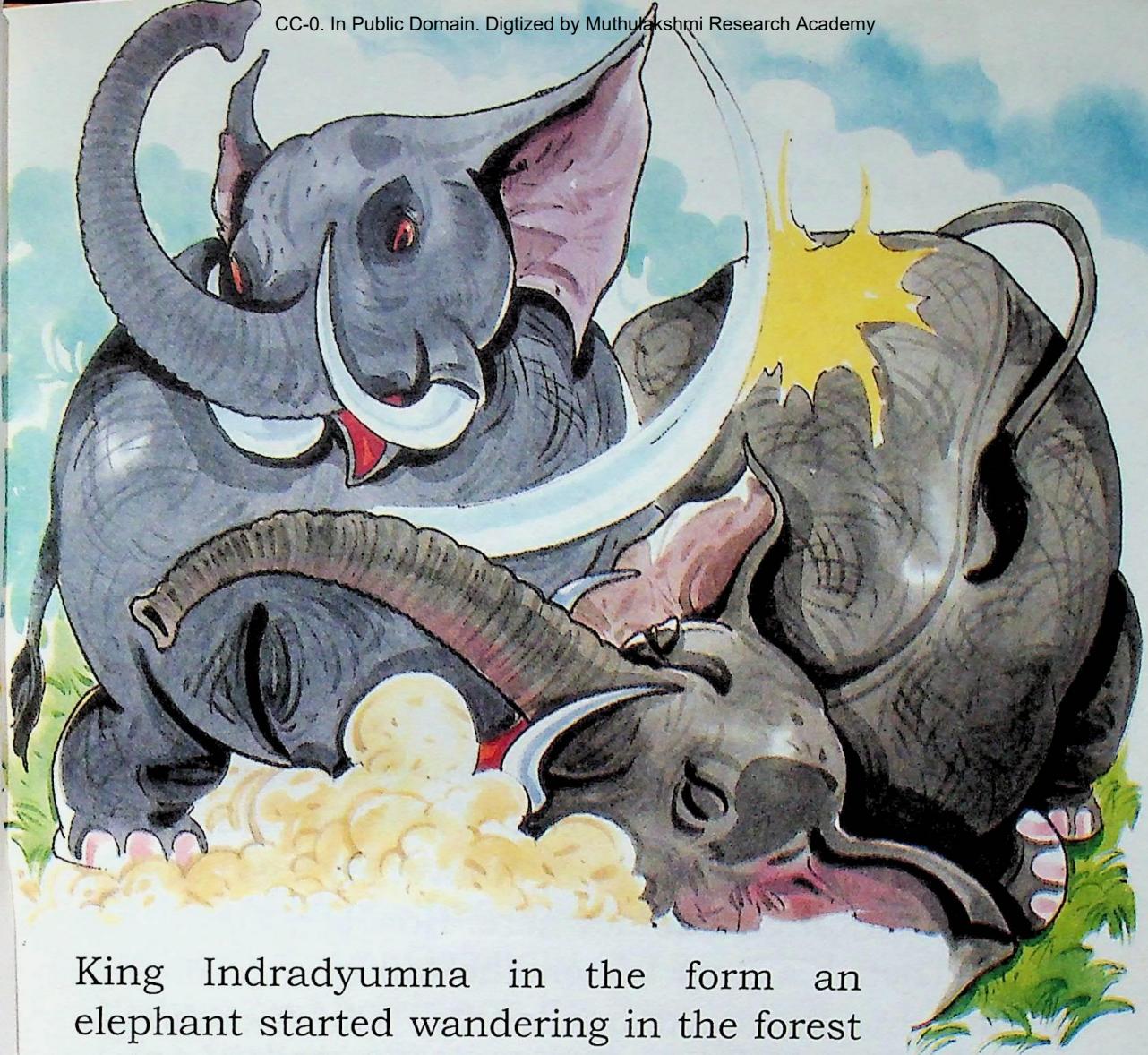
“Okay, Maharaja! As you like. We will not force you to deter yourself from your decision,” said the prime minister in a sad tone. Next day, the king Indradyumna left for the forest renouncing the kingdom. He made a hermitage in the forest of the mountain Koormaachal, and



lived like a hermit.

He took *Maon-Vrata* (abstinence from speaking) and started worshipping Lord Vishnu. He meditated for several days together. One day when he was in deep meditation, the *muni* Agastya happened to pass that way along with his disciples. As Indradyumna was engrossed in meditation, he could not see and honour the *muni* Agastya. The *muni* Agastya got angry. He cursed Indradyumna, “You didn’t honour the *muni* who came at your doorstep. So I curse you to turn into an elephant.”

Indradyumna turned into an elephant. Lord Vishnu sitting in *Vaikunth Dhaam* smiled and thought ‘Agastya *muni*! Unknowingly you have benefitted my devotee. Your curse will prove to be a boon for him.’



King Indradyumna in the form an elephant started wandering in the forest of Koormaachal. One day he saw a herd of elephants and thought to become their king. He challenged the leader of the elephants to fight a duel with him. The elephant king accepted the challenge. Indradyumna easily defeated him and became Gajendra i.e. the elephant king.

All elephants were happy under his leadership. One day Gajendra spoke to the elephants, "We should live at the Trikoot mountain which is better than Koormaachal. We will go there and capture the forest and make it our home." All the elephants agreed to

the proposal of Gajendra.

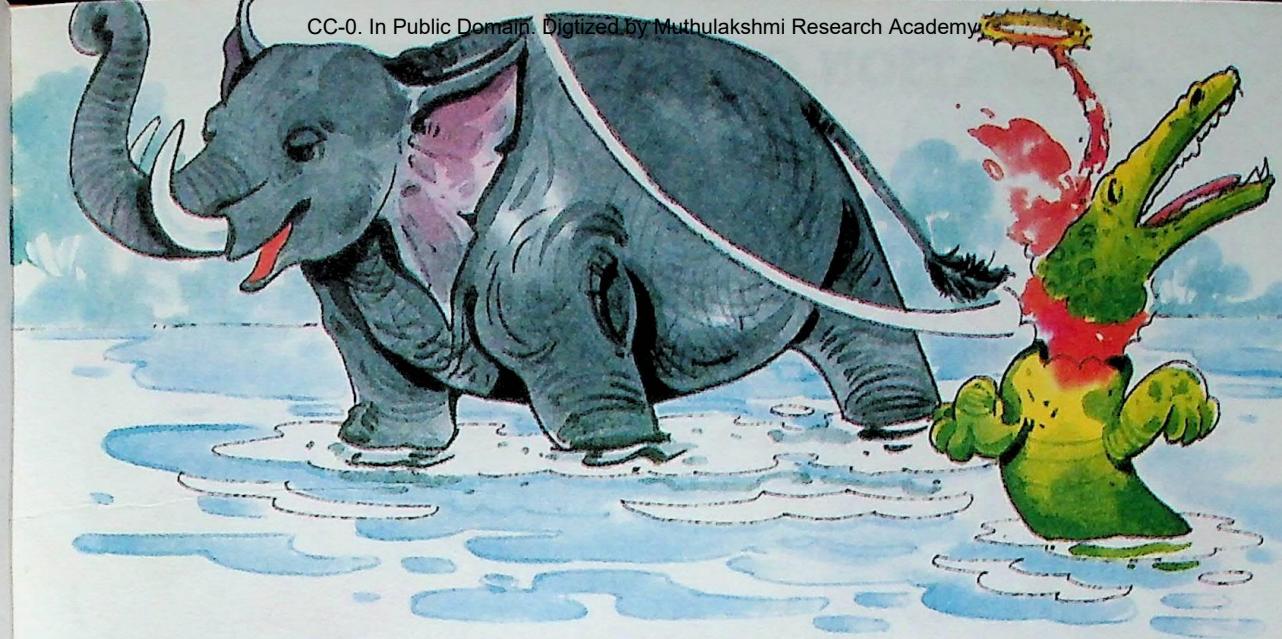
Gajendra with all the elephants left for the Trikoot forest and captured it. All wild animals accepted Gajendra's supremacy. Even lion, tiger, and wolf conceded to be his slaves.

One day Gajendra, with his friends, stepped into a lake in the Trikoot forest to take a bath. There lived a ferocious and wicked crocodile in the lake. He was sleeping at that time. The elephants played in the lake for sometime. This disturbed the crocodile's sleep. The crocodile became angry and thought, 'How dare Gajendra disturb my sleep. I will teach him a lesson.'

The crocodile moved towards Gajendra and caught his leg. Till then other elephants had gone out of the lake. Gajendra spoke, "I can't move. My legs seem to have got entangled somewhere. How should I come out?" Then his eyes fell on the tail of a crocodile. Seeing this, he spoke out loudly, "Oh! A crocodile has caught my leg. I am unable to move."

Hearing him, an elephant said, "Gajendra, try to free your leg. Surely you can free your leg from the mouth of the crocodile." Gajendra mustered all his strength to free his leg but to no avail. Then all the elephants tried their best and applied force to pull him out but all their efforts went in vain. After sometimes being tired the elephants left Gajendra and returned to the forest.

Gajendra was unable to tolerate any more. His life was in danger. So he remembered Lord Vishnu and



preyed to Him, "O world's guardian! Save me. Now only you can save my life."

Hearing the cry of Gajendra, Lord Vishnu rode on his carriage Garuda and left for the Trikoot forest. Reaching the lake, he cut off the neck of the crocodile with his *Chakra*. Gajendra took a sigh of relief. He immediately plucked a beautiful lotus from the lake and came out. Gajendra offered the lotus to Lord Vishnu and bowing on his front legs honoured Him. Lord Vishnu affectionately caressed his head. His touch changed Gajendra into human form and he bowed to the Lord. Lord Vishnu lifted him up and said, "I am pleased with you. I have come here for your welfare. Ask for a boon."

Indradyumna said folding both his hands, "O Lord! I don't have any worldly desire. I only request you to take me to Vaikunth Loka, so that I can see you every moment." Lord Vishnu said, "So it be!" Indradyumna reached Vaikunth Loka.

SALVATION OF THE ATTENDANTS



Once Pitamaha Brahma's sons Sanak, Sanandan, Sanat Kumar, and Sanatan reached Vaikunth to meet Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu was resting on snake's bed in Ksheer Sagar. As they stepped into Ksheer Sagar Lord Vishnu's two attendants stopped them. They were Jay and Vijay. They asked the Devkumars, "Whom do you want to meet?" The Devkumars said, "We want to meet Lord Vishnu." Jay said, "Our Lord is resting, please come later." The Devkumars said, "We have an important work with him, so it is necessary for us to meet him now." Vijay said, "However important the work, you can't meet him right now. We will not allow anybody to disturb him."

Listening so the Devkumars became angry. Sanak stepped forward and said, "Oh fools! Don't you know, we are Brahma's sons. Don't try to stop us."

Jay and Vijay said, "Whosoever you are; we will not allow you to meet our Lord. Go back." Saying so they stood on the way to Ksheer Sagar.

This angered the Devkumars. They cursed them and

said, "You do not deserve to be the attendants of the Lord. Go onto the earth and spend your life there."

Hearing the curse both the attendants fell on the Devkumar's feet and begged for forgiveness. By then Lord Vishnu had woken. When he got aware of the whole matter, he politely said to the Devkumars, "I admit that Jay and Vijay have committed a sin by stopping you, but it was all due to their loyalty to me. So forgive them."

Then the four sons of Brahma said, "O Lord! You know that a curse can't be taken back. However, they will return to Vaikunth by your blessings. Until they receive your blessings, they will have to live a sinful life on the earth." Due to the curse, they were born to Diti, Maharshi Kashyap's wife. They were named Hiranyakashyapa and Hiranyaksha. At their birth, an earthquake-like tumult was felt in all the three worlds. Devraj Indra, seeing his throne shaking, went to Lord Vishnu and said, "Lord! What kind of earthquake is this? I apprehend something



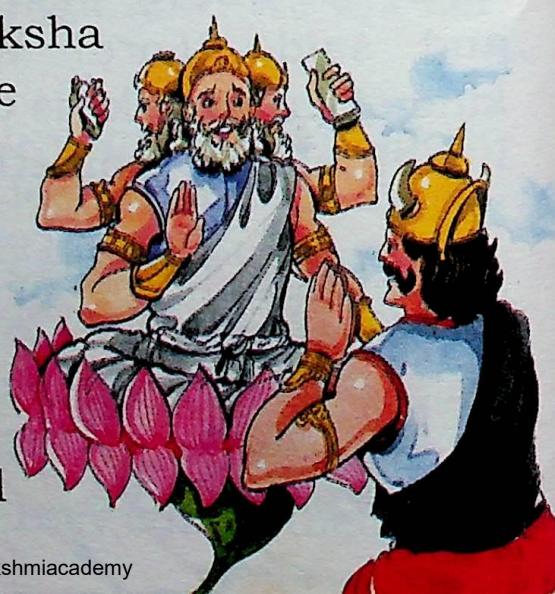


untoward to happen.” Lord Vishnu told him the entire incident of Jay and Vijay’s being cursed. Indra said, “Lord! When there is such a powerful earthquake merely at their birth then what devastation will they cause on being grown up?”

God Vishnu said, “Probably you are forgetting that if someone takes birth, it dies also. Just, have patience.”

Having grown up Hiranyaksha performed severe tapa to please Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma appeared and told him to ask for a boon. Hiranyaksha said, “God, if you are pleased with me, give me a boon that no god, demon, and human being can kill me. I would stay unconquerable.” Brahmaji disappeared saying “Amen!”.

Getting the boon, Hiranyaksha considered himself to be the most powerful person on the earth. Being intoxicated of his power, he churned the sea. As a result there rose terrible waves in the sea. The Sea God was badly scared and

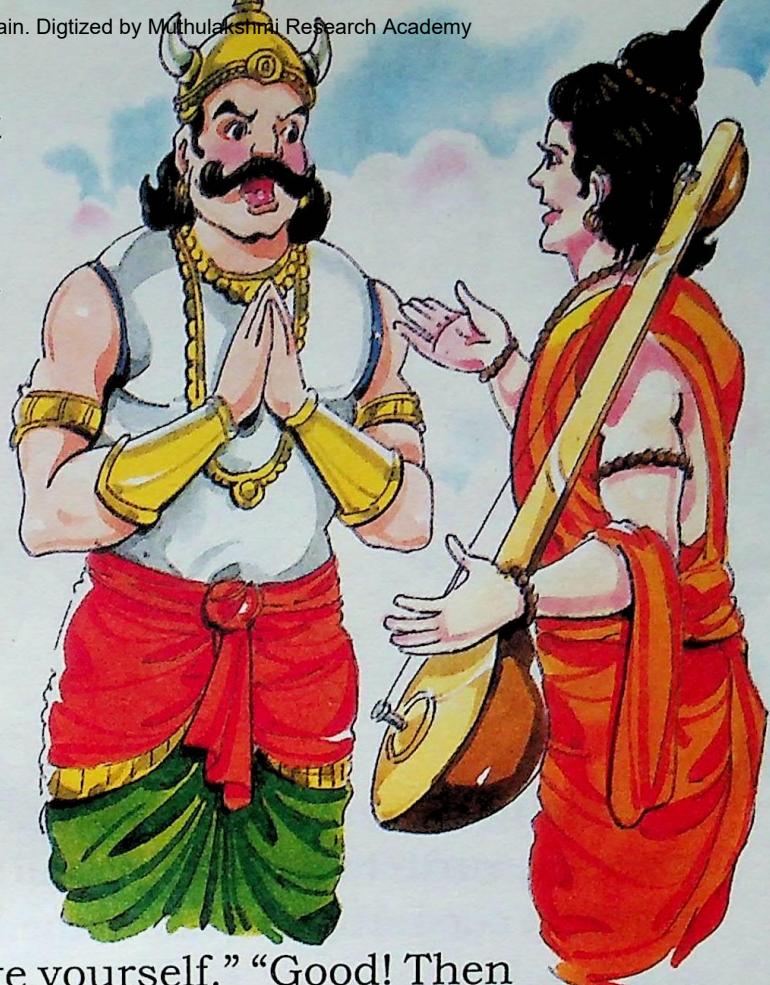


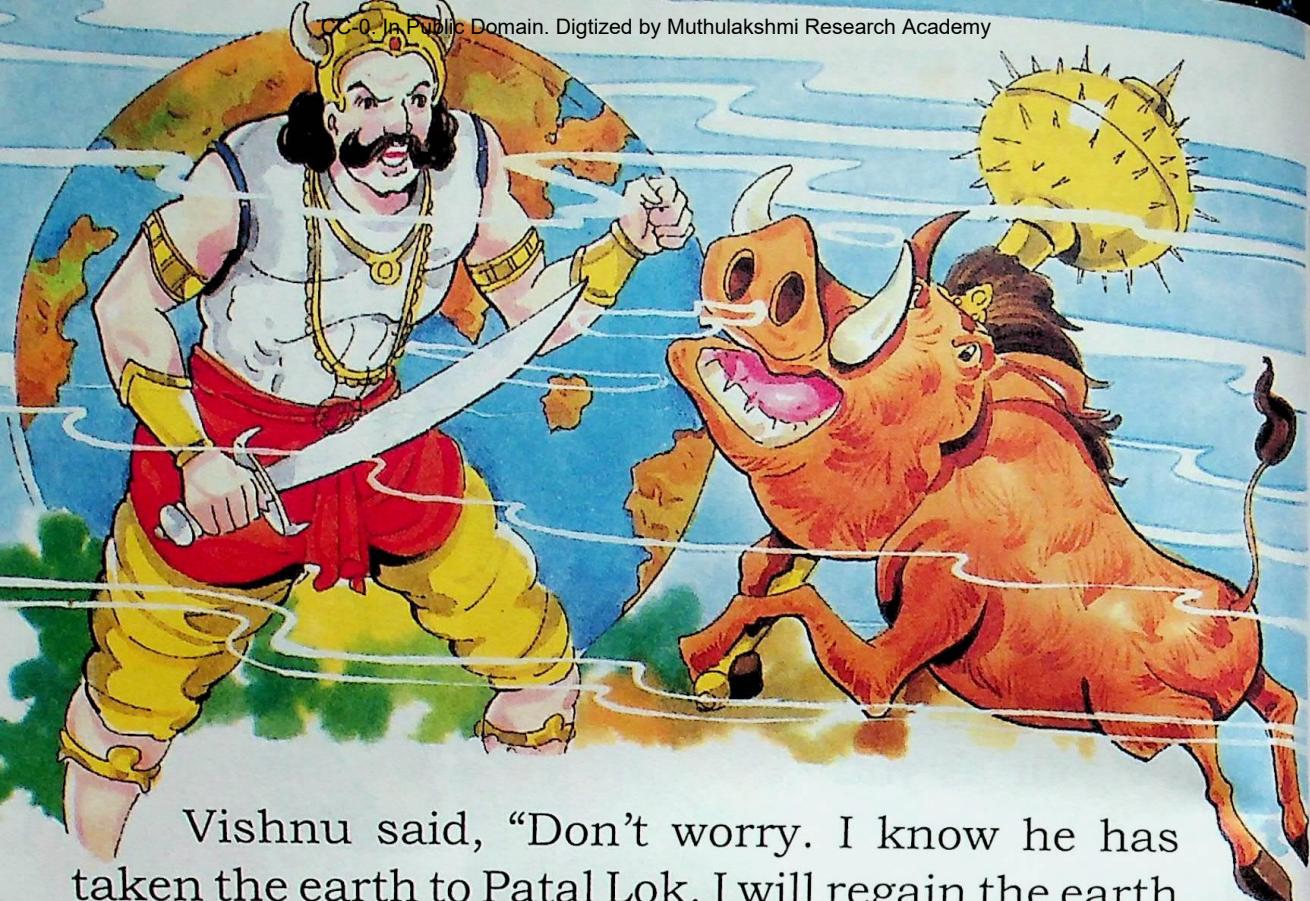
began to run away. Hiranyaksha went to him and asked, "Where will you go? Accept my slavery, else fight with me." Realising his weakness, the Sea God said, "I don't possess such courage and vigour as you do. You should fight against a courageous and

vigorous person like yourself." "Good! Then you are my slave henceforth," said Hiranyaksha.

Thereafter, Hiranyaksha went ahead. On the way, he met Devarshi Narada. He said to him, "O Narada! Can you tell me where I can meet a powerful person like me?" Narada said, "Yes-yes, why not? Only Vishnu is as powerful as you. Go and fight with him."

Hiranyaksha immediately set out in search of Lord Vishnu. But when he did not find him, he thought, 'I will take the entire earth to Patal Lok. Vishnu must be living somewhere on the earth.' He then, took the earth to Patal Lok. The gods were worried due to disappearance of the earth. They went to Lord Vishnu and spoke, "Lord! We do not know where Hiranyaksha has taken the earth. Help us."



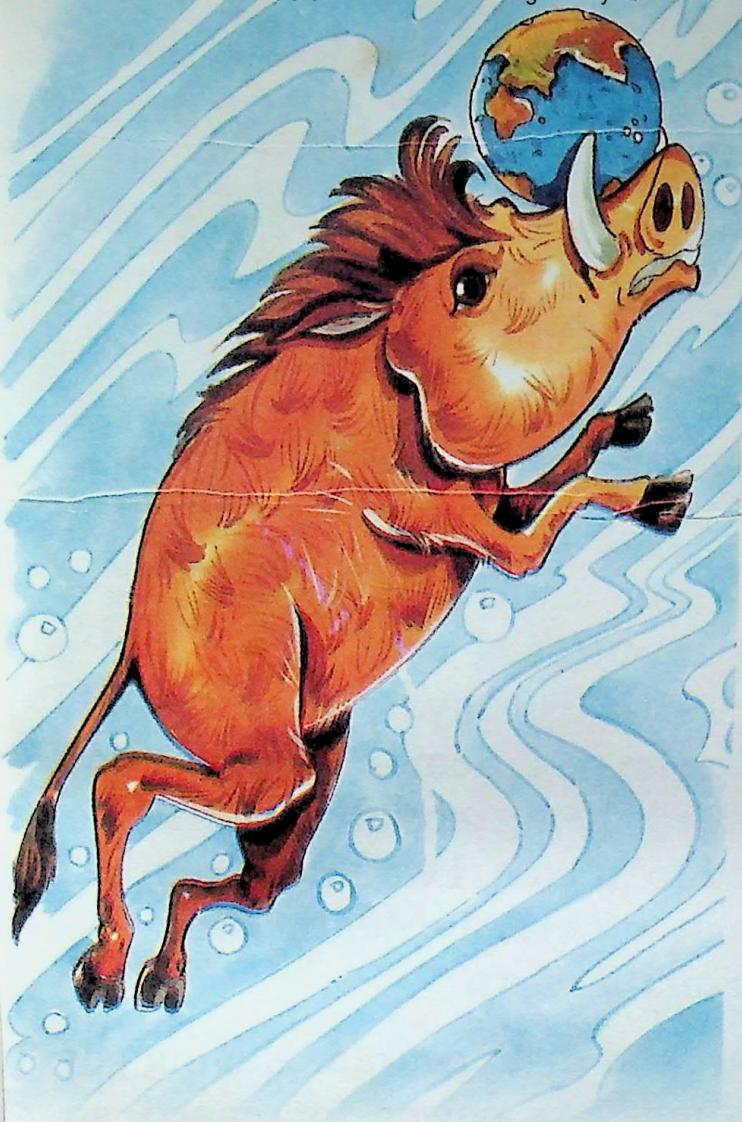


Vishnu said, "Don't worry. I know he has taken the earth to Patal Lok. I will regain the earth from him soon. His end has come."

Vishnu took the form of a great Varaha and reached Patal Lok where he challenged Hiranyaksha for a battle. Hiranyaksha said, "It seems that your death has brought you here. What harm can you do to me?"

A ferocious battle was fought. Hiranyaksha by his illusory power shot many weapons at Varaha but to no avail. Seeing this, Hiranyaksha pounced on Varaha and pressed him under his arms. Varah made a Sudarshan Chakra by his yogic power and separated Hiranyaksha's head from his body. Then Vishnu in Varaha's form brought the earth out of the Patal Lok and restored it as it was before.

When Hiranyakashyapa heard the news of his brother's death, he vowed that he would not sit



peacefully until he avenged his brother's death.

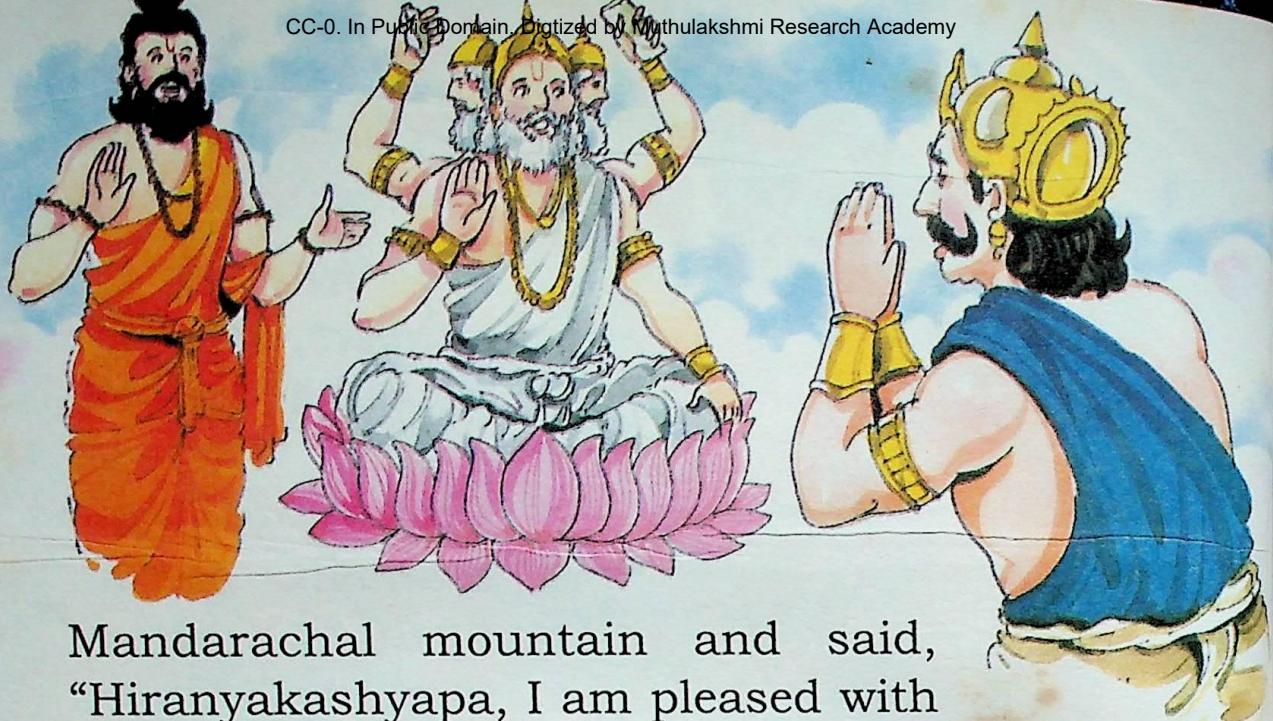
He ordered his soldiers, "Go and spread all over the earth. Wherever you find any brahmin, hermit, and god worshipper kill him on the spot."

His soldiers started tormenting hermits, saints, and common people. Wherever they saw temples they destroyed

them. On the other hand Hiranyakashyapa also started severe *tapa* on the Mandarachal mountain. His *tapa* was so severe that all the three worlds started burning due to its effect.

Devraj Indra went to Lord Brahma and said, "Pitamaha! Hiranyakashyapa's *tapa*, is so severe that all the three worlds are burning. Please fulfil his wish immediately and save the whole universe."

Brahma said, "Don't worry. I will just go with Bhrigu Rishi to the Mandarachal mountain and release him from his *tapa*." Saying so Brahma went to the



Mandarachal mountain and said, "Hiranyakashyapa, I am pleased with you. Ask, what you want." Hiranyakashyapa said, "Grant me a boon that no god, demon, human, nor any living or non-living being could kill me. No weapon could be used to kill me. I would die neither in the daytime nor at night. My death could be neither in the sky nor on the earth."

Brahma said, "Amen!" and disappeared. Having got the boon from Brahma, his power increased so enormously that he conquered all the three worlds. Now he turned his face away from religion due to his arrogance. He made an announcement in his kingdom, "All citizens need to worship my image only. If anybody is found worshiping any other god, he will be punished severely."

Hiranyakashyapa had four sons. Prahlada was the youngest one. He was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashyapa asked him, not to worship Lord Vishnu, but it had no effect on him.

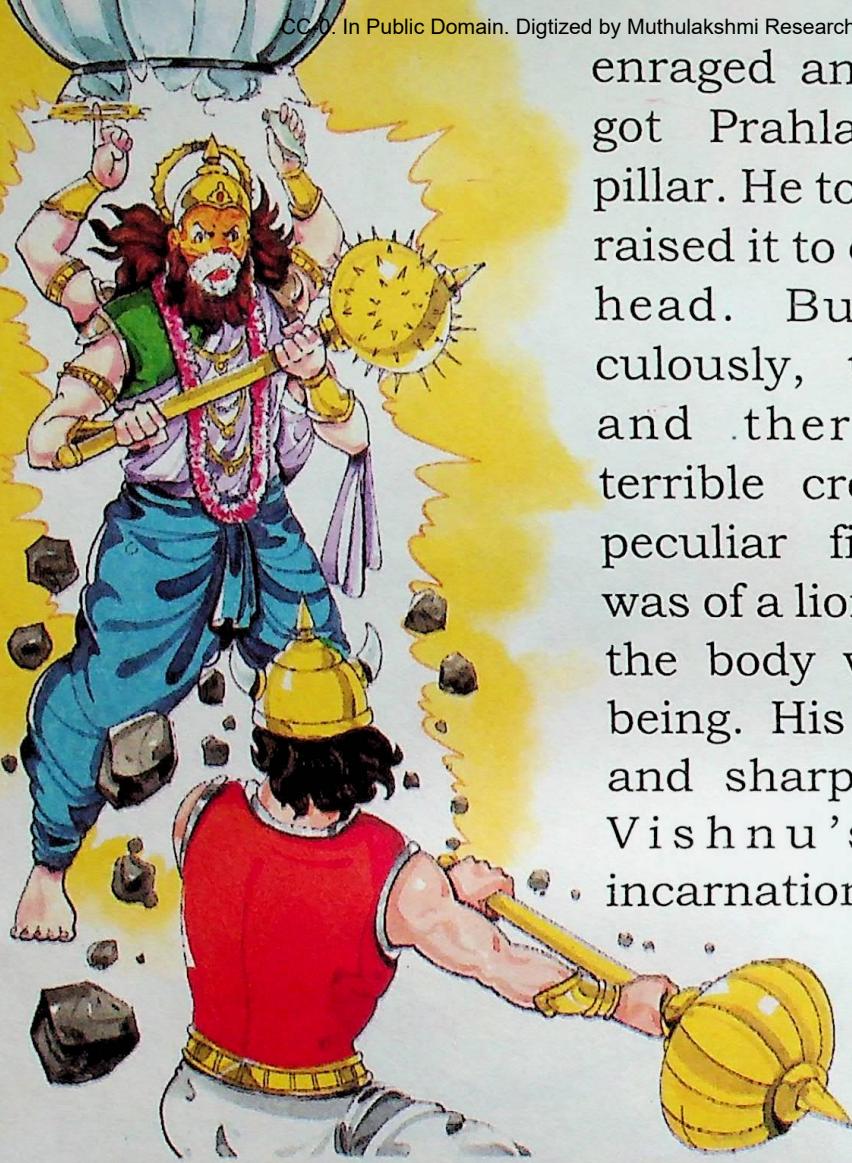
He said, "Father, is there anyone greater than

Lord? He is the guardian of the world, whereas you are only my guardian."

Hiranyakashyapa got angry. He ordered to kill his son. His commander mixed poison in the milk and gave it to Prahlada. Chanting Lord Vishnu's name, Prahlada drank up the milk, but nothing happened to him.

Hiranyakashyapa lost his temper. He ordered to throw Prahlada down from the top of a mountain. His order was carried out but nothing happened to him. Now Hiranyakashyapa became worried. He called his sister Holika who had a boon of not getting burnt in fire and ordered her to sit in the burning fire taking Prahlada in her lap. But by Lord Vishnu's grace Prahlada was saved and Holika was burnt. Now, Hiranyakashyapa was badly





enraged and frustrated. He got Prahlada fastened to a pillar. He took his sword and raised it to cut off Prahlada's head. But then, miraculously, the pillar burst and there appeared a terrible creature having a peculiar figure. His head was of a lion while the rest of the body was of a human being. His claws were long and sharp. This was Lord Vishnu's Narasimha incarnation. He himself had appeared in the form of 'Narasimha' to save his devotee's life.

He spoke to Hiranyakashyapa, "Now your death is sure. See, I have no weapon! And I am neither human nor god nor a demon! I am your death!"

Saying so he put Hiranyakashyapa on his thighs and ripped his stomach apart with his claws. Hiranyakashyapa died on the spot. Prahlada fell at the feet of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu blessed him, "Son, you will be recognised as one of my best devotees and your glory will spread for ages.

VISHNU IN THE FORM OF NAR-NARAYAN



Dharma, Brahma's son, was married to Daksha's daughter Moorti. They had twin sons—Nar and Narayan who had a wonderful glow on their faces. When the brothers grew up, they went to Badrikashrama at the Himalayas and started meditation. Seeing their tough *tapa*, Indra felt his throne trembling. He thought, 'If Nar and Narayan continue their *tapa* they will be able to possess my throne. I should interrupt their *tapasya*, or else...' He then called Kamdeva and apsaras and ordered them, "Kamdeva, go to Badrikashrama with apsaras and interrupt the *tapa* of Nar and Narayan by all means."

Kamdeva immediately reached Badrikashrama with apsaras and spread his *maya* (illusion). The apsaras started dancing and singing. But Kamdeva's illusion had no effect on the two brothers. They remained engrossed in their *tapasya*.

Finally, Kamdeva returned to Indra Loka and told Indra that his illusion had no effect on Nar and

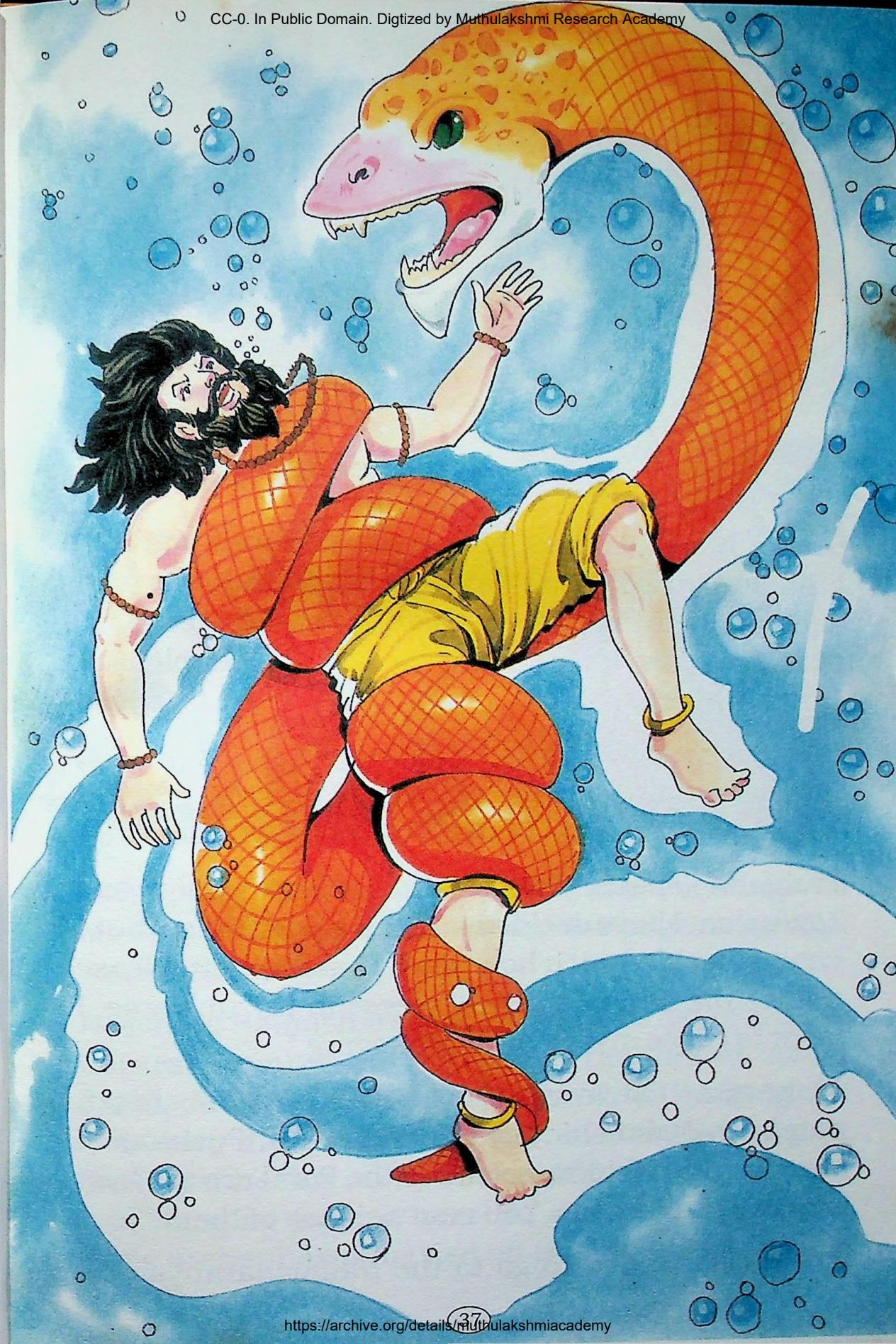
Narayan. Indra got worried with Kamdeva's failure. He spoke, "I will have to try some other trick, to interrupt their *tapa*." Thereafter, Indra tried his best to interrupt the meditation of Nar and Narayan but could not succeed.

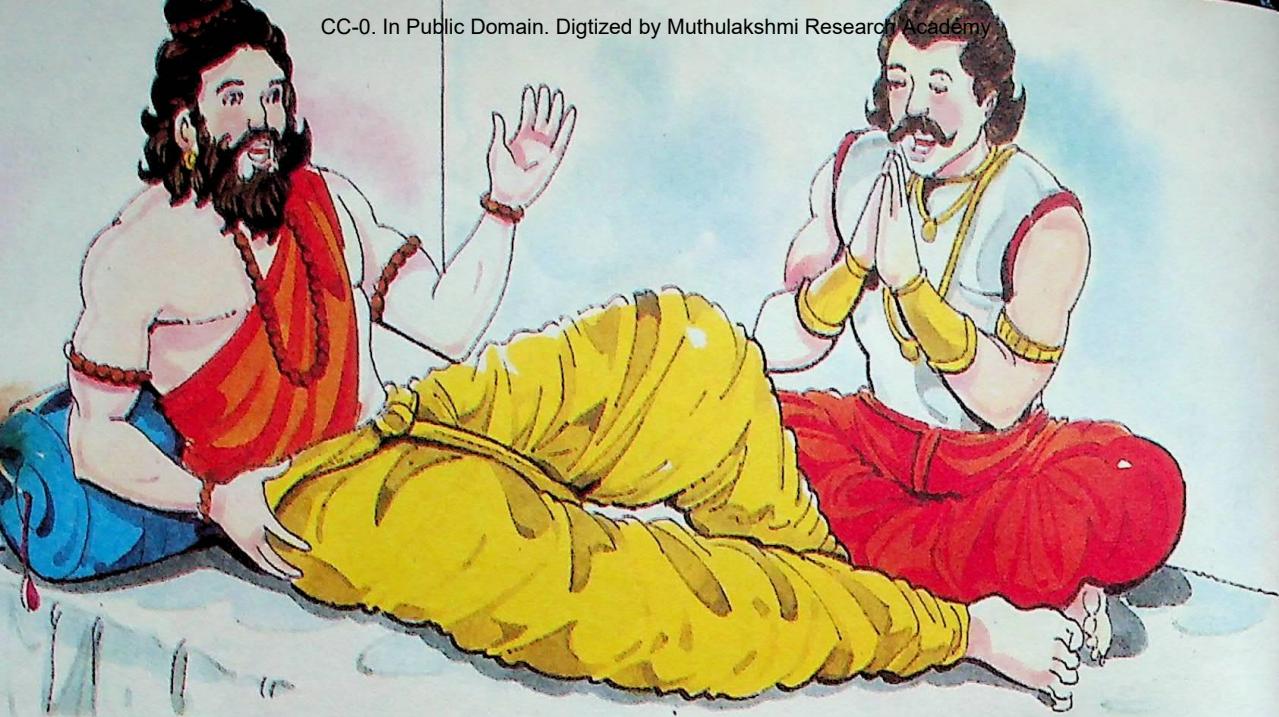
One day Indra's wish seemed to have fulfilled. It so happened, that Maharshi Chyavan went to bathe in the Narmada river at the Nakuleshvar, a place of pilgrimage. As he stepped into the river, a gigantic snake caught his leg. He said to the snake, "O wicked! Leave my leg or else I will curse you." Hearing it the serpent's courage increased even more. He took hold of Maharshi's body firmly. Maharshi felt suffocated and angrily cursed the snake that he would become poisonless.

Due to the curse the serpent became poisonless. But the hermit, also became unconscious and the serpent took him to Patal Loka. When the hermit got conscious he was amazed to find himself in Patal Loka. In the meantime some demons reached there and took Maharshi Chyavan to Prahlada, the king of demons. Prahlada welcomed Maharshi Chyavan warmly and said, "O pious soul! You have blessed my kingdom by coming here. Please tell how can I serve you."

Maharshi said, "O King, I haven't come here at my will. A serpent has brought me here forcefully."

"Your arrival here is enough for us. We shall be highly obliged to you, if you allow us to serve you for some days." Prahlada said.





Seeing his reverence, Maharshi Chyavan agreed. Prahlada would himself arrange for Maharshi's food and at night when Maharshi would rest, he massaged his legs. Maharshi was much pleased with Prahlada.

One day when Prahlada was busy in serving him, Maharshi said, "I am very pleased with you. If you have any doubt, ask me without any hesitation."

Prahlada spoke, "Maharshi, I have only one confusion. I have decided to go for a pilgrimage, but I cannot decide which holy place I should visit. Please tell me the best of the holy places in the universe. I want to efface myself by pilgraming."

Maharshi Chyavan said, "Okay, now listen carefully. Naimisharanya on the earth, Pushkar in the sky, and Chakrateertha in the Patal are the best places of pilgrimage. You may visit any of them."

Prahlada decided to go to the Naimisharanya, the



holy place on earth. He took the blessings of Maharshi Chyavan and started his pilgrimage with some companions.

Reaching Naimisharanya, he was amazed to see the natural beauty there. Seeing the dense forest Prahlada could not resist his greed for hunting. He went into the dense forest with his companions. In the forest he saw many snakes shot dead by arrows and hanging from a tree. He said, "It seems that some archer has practised on them. Snakes are our

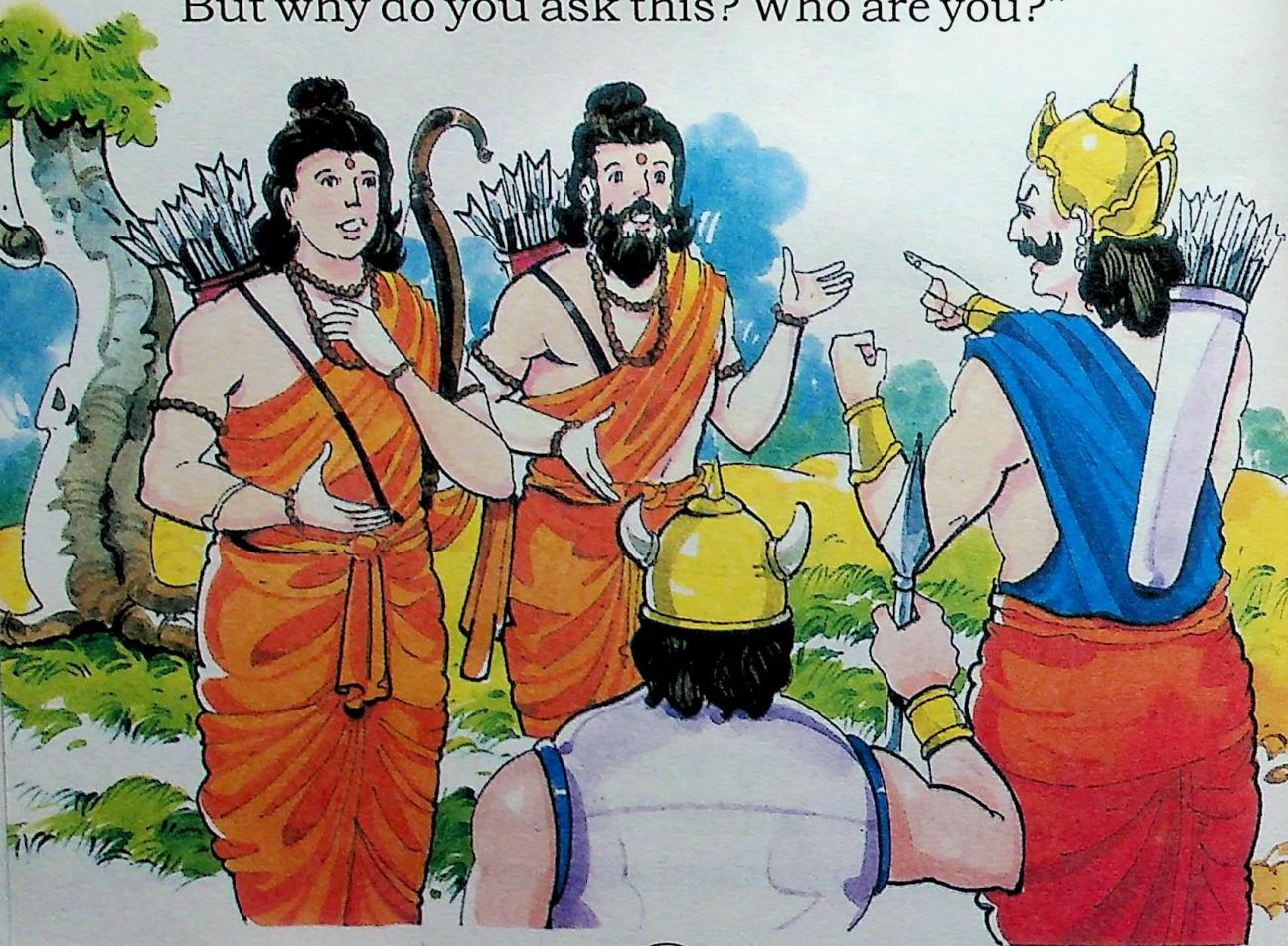
friends. Whosoever has killed them is our enemy. Let us search for him." Hardly had he walked some steps with his companions, he saw two ascetics with bows and arrows. Seeing them one of his companions said, "Maharaja, perhaps, these ascetics have caused misery to our friends. We should find out the truth."

"Yes, you are right. Let us go and find out?"

They went to them and asked, "Who are you? What are you doing in this dense forest? Have you killed the snakes on the tree."

Both the ascetic said, "We are Nar and Narayan. We practise archery besides meditating. We left the snakes on the tree after practising archery on them.

But why do you ask this? Who are you?"



This angered Prahlada. He said, "I am demons' king, Prahlada. These snakes were my friends. You have committed a sin by killing them. So you both will be punished."

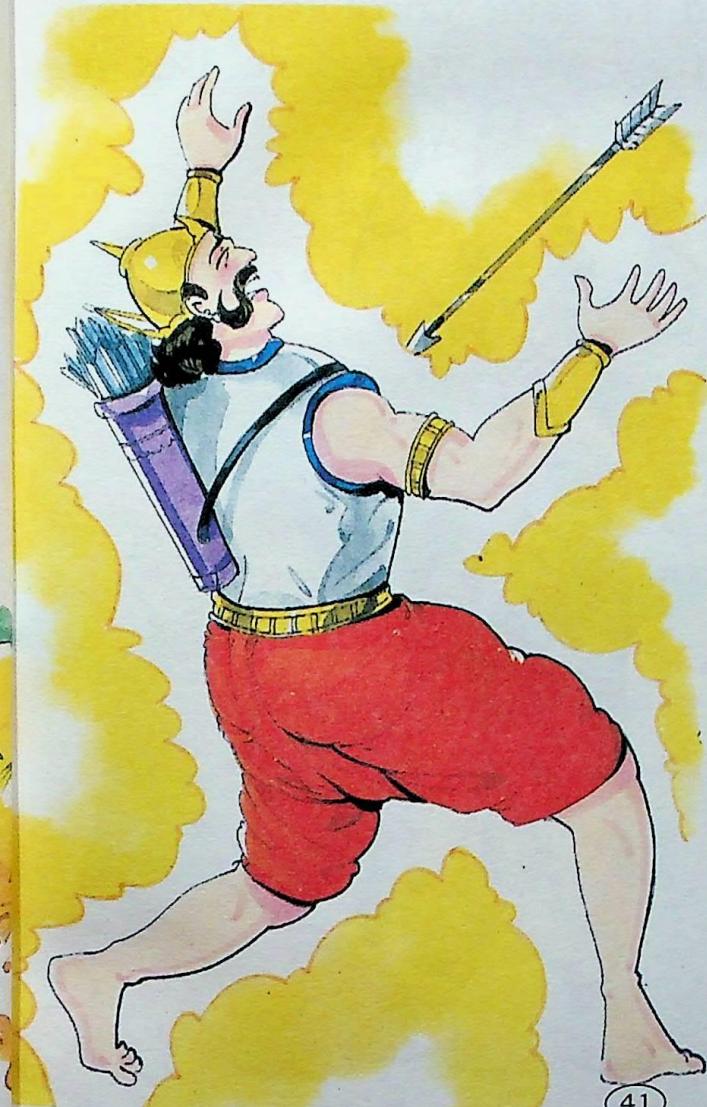
"Well! You will punish us! No one on the whole earth is capable of punishing us. Do you hear? Go away from here for your own good," the ascetics said.

Prahlada spoke in anger, "How dare you blow the dignity of a Demons' king? I will teach you a lesson."

Prahlada shot an arrow at Nar. But Narayan cut his arrow in the middle. A fierce battle broke out

between the Demons' king and Nar and Narayan. King Prahlada vowed that he would make Nar and Narayan bow before him. Countless fiery arrows began to be rained from both sides. An arrow hit Prahlada and he became unconscious. His soldiers took him away.

When Prahlada came to senses he was much upset to know about his pitiable condition in the dual.



He thought, 'How did I get defeated by those ascetics. I should go to Lord Vishnu and ask him about it.' He immediately set out for Vaikunth.

Reaching Vaikunth he bowed to the Lord Vishnu and said, "O Lord! You are omniscient. I have come here to know the secret of my defeat from two ascetics."

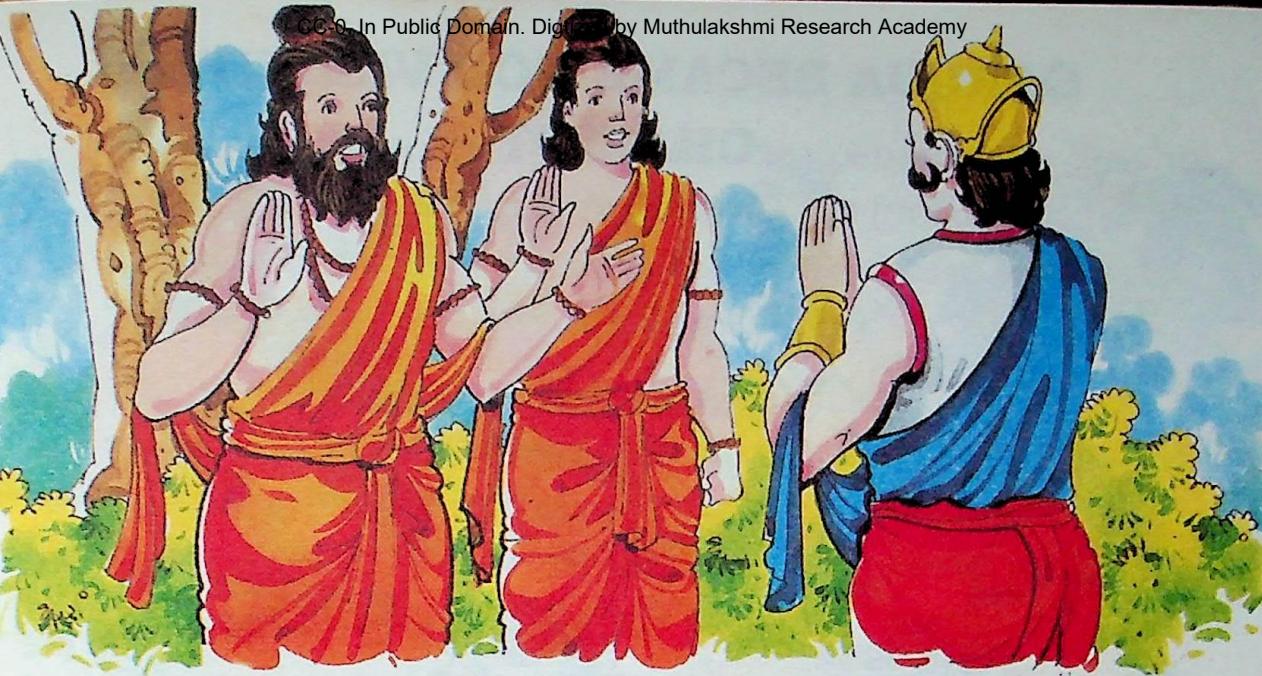
Vishnu smiled and said, "Prahlada, you are only my devotee, but they are my own part. Now you can understand yourself how you could not win over them."

Prahlada was surprised. He said, "Lord! Forgive me. I did not know that they were your part. But a dilemma lies still. I have taken a vow to defeat them. What will happen to it now?"

"Don't worry. You can defeat them by other methods also. Go and please them by worshipping. If they are pleased, your victory is certain," Vishnu said.

Prahlada came back to Naimisharanya and devoted himself





in the worship of Nar and Narayan. In due course of time Nar and Narayan appeared before Prahlada and said, "Prahlada, we are pleased with you. But we could not understand why you are worshipping us despite the fact, you had pledged to defeat us?"

Prahlada said, "Please forgive me. I didn't know your real form. But now I know all about you due to the grace of Lord Vishnu. He advised me to worship you."

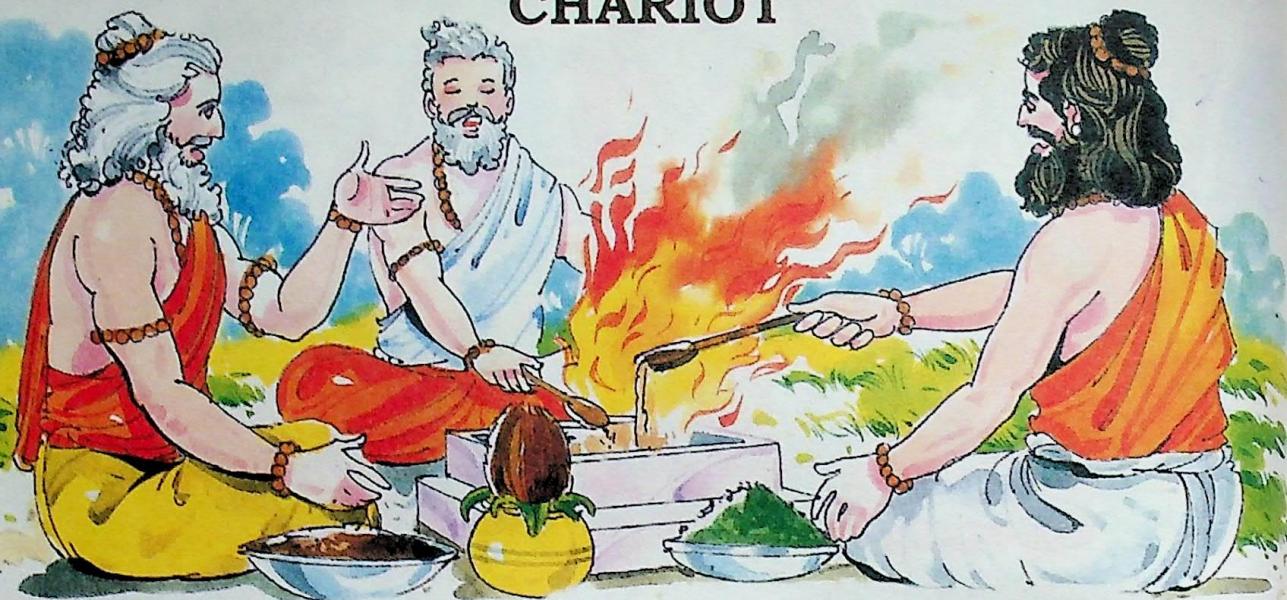
Then, the two brothers forgave him and granted him a boon that he would be young forever and immortal and he would be remembered forever as a staunch devotee of Lord Vishnu.

On returning to Patal Loka Prahlada handed over the reign to Andhak (his cousin), Hiranyaksha's son and went to forest.

He spent all his life in chanting the name of Hari and attained Vaikunth. On the other hand, Indra realised his mistake, he never created any hurdle in the tapasya of Nar and Narayan.

GARUDA BECAME GOD VISHNU'S

CHARIOT



Long ago, a hermit Kashyap lived in the forest with his thirteen wives. He loved Vinita and Kadru the most. But Kadru was jealous of Vinita. She did not like Kashyap, loving any woman other than herself. Whereas Vinita was very genial and modest. One day both the wives expressed their desire of having sons from the hermit Kashyap. Vinita wished for only one son while Kadru for a thousand sons.

Kashyap said, "I am going to perform a *yajna*, after that your wish shall be fulfilled."

After some days the hermit Kashyap performed a *yajna* in which several hermits and gods took part. The *yajna* was performed successfully. Thereafter, the hermit Kashyap went to perform *tapasya*.

After some months Kadru and Vinita delivered one thousand and two eggs respectively. They took care of their respective eggs cautiously. Kadru got impatient and broke her eggs, black snakes came out from them. Kadru cheerfully showed her

offsprings to Vinita.

Vinita was also curious to see her offsprings. So she broke one of the eggs. An immature foetus came out from it. Seeing it, she got frightened and regretted, "O God! What a sin I have committed!"

Then the immature baby spoke, "The sin which you have committed will result in your slavery of Kadru. But your son from the other egg will set you free from it. So don't hurry in breaking the second egg." Saying so the baby flew off.

Now Vinita waited for the hatching of the egg. The egg hatched at the right time and a baby Garuda came out from it. Garuda had a rapid growth. He loved his mother very much and took great care of her. His step brothers would fight against him but Garuda alone was capable of defeating all of them.

Kadru wished for her sons' win. She thought of a plan, 'If I make Vinita my slave somehow Garuda will



also come under my lordship and will not be able to defeat my sons.'



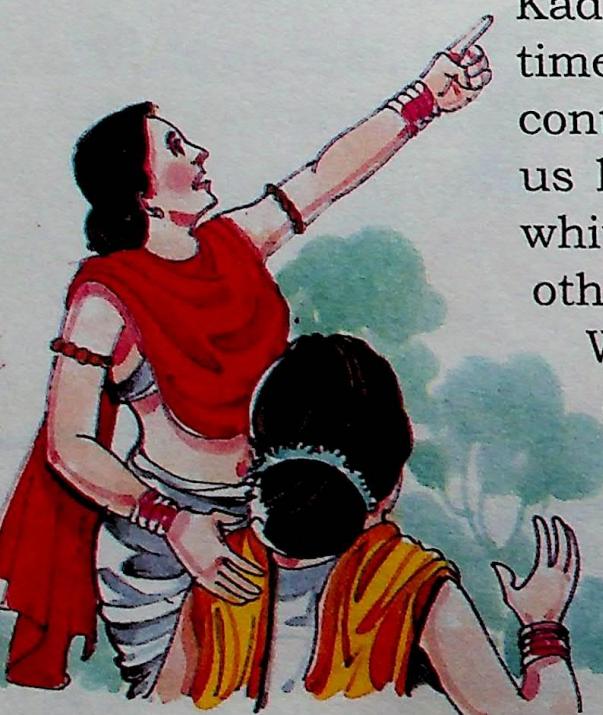
One day Kadru saw the divine horse Uchchashrava in the sky. She called out Vineeta immediately.

She asked her, "Vinita, do you see the white horse flying in the sky? What is its colour?"

Vinita replied, "White."

Kadru spoke, "Look carefully. It's not completely white."

Vinita asserted, "No, you are confused. The horse is completely white."



Kadru thought it to be the right time to put Vinita under her control. So she spoke out, "Let us have a bet! If the horse is white, you are the winner, otherwise I am the winner.

Whoever loses will go under other's slavery. Do you agree?"

Vinita agreed. Thereafter, they both went back to their rooms. Kadru

called her sons and said, “Go quickly and cover the horse Uchchashrava’s tail with your bodies, so that it may look black while flying.”

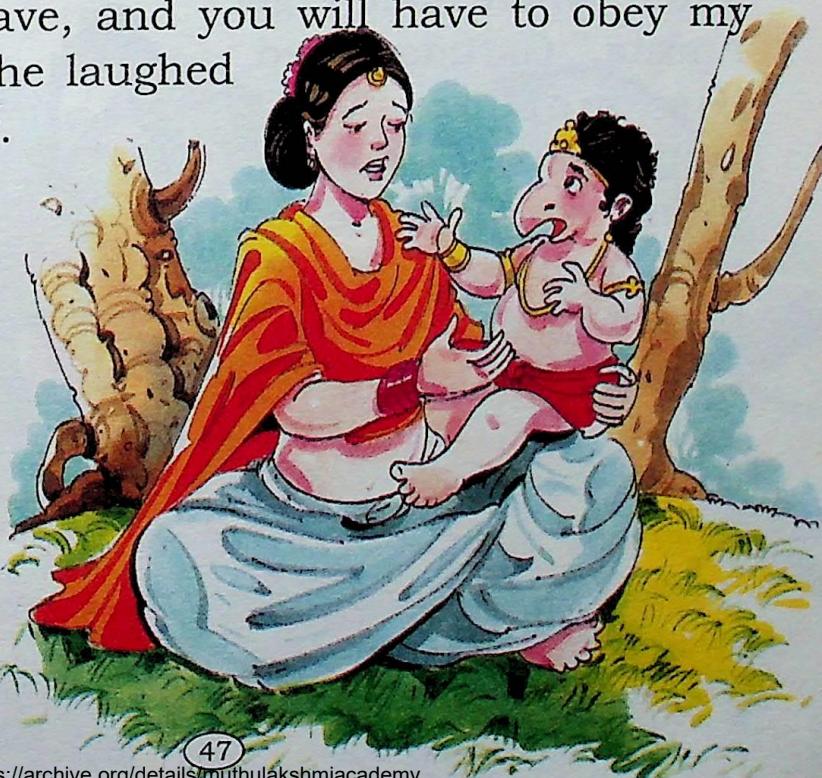
The serpents bowed to their mother and said, “Sure! It’s a matter of your honour. We are at your command.”

Saying so they flew to the horse and did as their mother had told them. As soon as Uchchashrava came into Kadru’s sight the next morning, she called Vinita and said, “Now differentiate the colours of the body and the tail. Verify whether the tail is black or not?”

Vinita was taken aback seeing the black tail of the horse. She wondered how could it change overnight! She suspected Kadru to have played a trick but she had no proof.

Then Kadru spoke rolling her eyes, “Have you seen the horse thoroughly? You did not believe me yesterday! Now you have lost the bet. Henceforth, you are my slave, and you will have to obey my orders.” And she laughed wholeheartedly.

Helpless Vinita submitted to Kadru. Now Kadru would get every work done by her, and scolded her now and then. Vinita’s



life became miserable. Garuda noticed this and asked her, "Mother, you seem to be very unhappy these days. Please tell me the reason."

Vinita told him all that had happened. Then Garuda asked, "Mother, is there any way to get rid of this slavery?"

Vinita said, "This can be known only from Kadru on what conditions she will set me free."

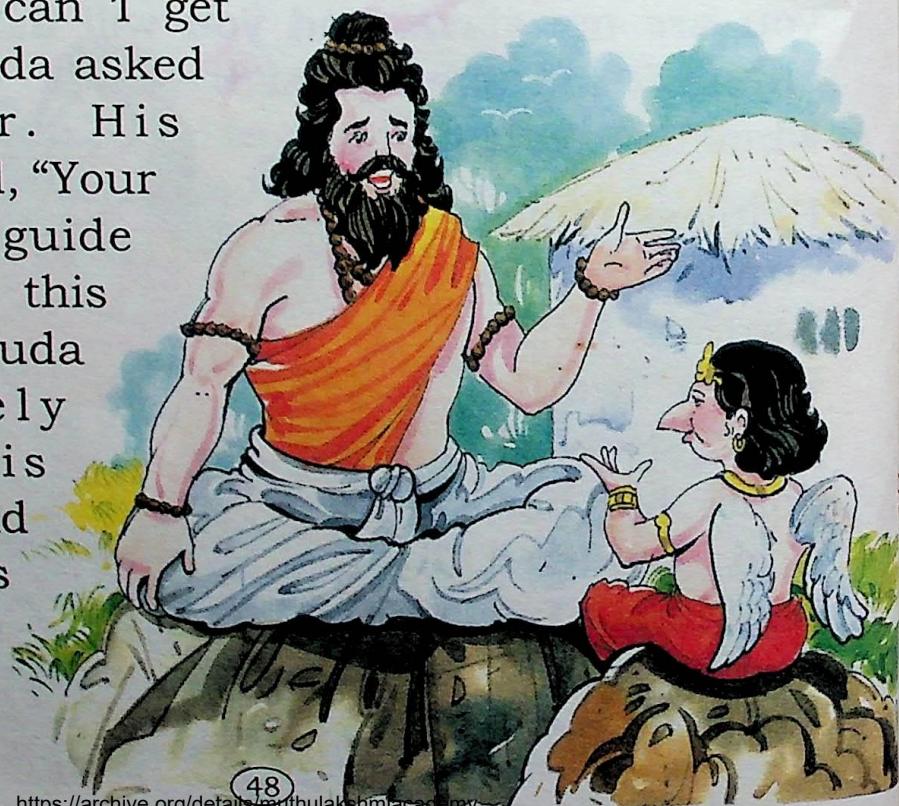
Garuda spoke, "Mother, if it is so, we should not delay in talking to her."

They went to Kadru. Garuda said, "Please set my mother free from your slavery. For this I can do whatever you wish."

Kadru said, "I can set your mother free only if you fetch 'nectar', the elixir of life, and give it to my sons." Garuda agreed.

'From where can I get Amrita,' Garuda asked his mother. His mother replied, "Your father can guide you well in this regard." Garuda immediately reached his father and told him of his intention.

Kashyap



spoke, "Son, nectar is kept safely in the centre of a Lake. Gods' king Indra has made it impregnable." Garuda spoke, "Father, in whatever tight security, the Amrita-pot is, I am determined, to fetch it. Please tell me what I should eat on the way, if I am hungry."

Kashyap said smilingly, "Son, on your way you will come across a village full of wicked Nishadas. You can satisfy your hunger by eating them. If you need even more, consume the big tortoise and elephants living in the lake."

Garuda took his father's blessings and started his mission. On the way, he ate the Nishadas. Then he reached the lake and gripped the tortoise and elephant in his paws, and flew towards a comfortable place to eat them. He reached the mountain *Gandh Madan*. As he tried to sit in the branch of a tree it broke. He saw some hermits, performing *tapasya* hanging upside down on a



branch. Seeing this he instantly caught the branch by his beak. Then taking the branch along with the hermits, the tortoise and the elephant he flew back to his father's Ashram. His father understood everything. He requested all the hermits to descend from the branch. The hermits accepted Kashyap's request.

Garuda then satisfied his hunger by eating the tortoise and elephant, and started on his mission again. When he neared the pot of nectar he saw two gods and a revolving *Chakra* safeguarding it. To avoid any struggle he assumed a tiny form and tried to reach the pot.

But both the gods saw Garuda and thought him to be a demon. In a fierce fight Garuda wounded them severely with his pointed beak. The gods became unconscious. Garuda took the nectar in his possession, and flew away.

After a short while the gods came to senses and rushed to Indra. They told him about the incident. Indra instantly set out with his army. On the way he saw Garuda. He instantly hurled his Vajra at



Garuda. But to his surprise Vajra had no effect on him. It fell down on the ground after colliding with his feathers. Then Indra's army attacked Garuda. But Garuda's sharp beak and paws made the whole army almost half-dead. Indra was amazed to see Garuda's extraordinary valour. He thought, 'This hero does not deserve enmity but amity.' He spoke to Garuda, "O king of birds! I am impressed with your valour. But return this nectar-pot to me and get a boon from me instead."

Garuda spoke, "No, I can't do this, as I am carrying this to set my mother free from the slavery of Kadru, the serpents' mother."

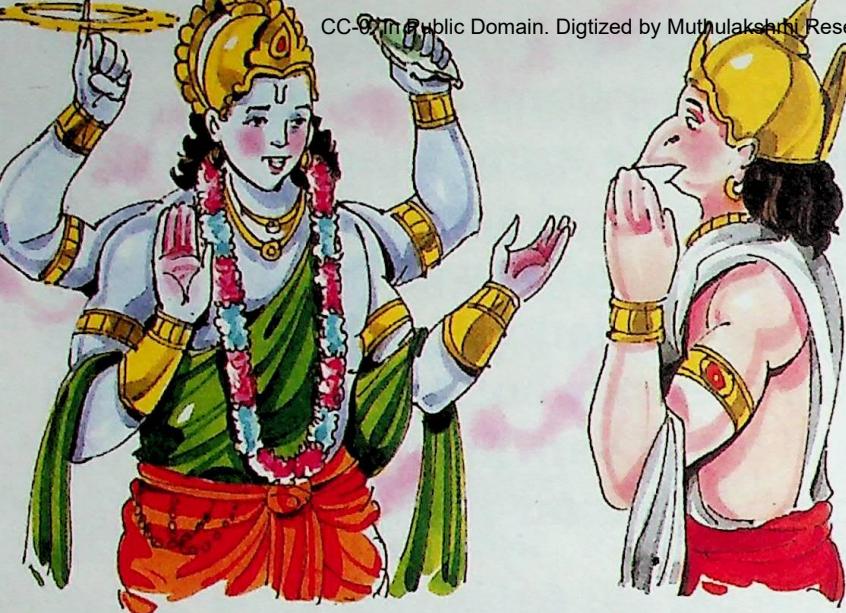
Hearing the whole matter, Indra spoke in an amicable tone, "It's okay, you take this nectar pot with you, but do one thing. Deliver this to the serpents' mother but don't let them drink it for a while. In the meantime, I will bring it back to heaven secretly."

Garuda said, "I agree, but what will I get in return?"

Indra said, "Your favourite food. I will allow you to eat those serpants."

Garuda with the nectar pot reached Kadru and handed it over to her. He said, "I have completed





my promise. Now it's your turn. Release my mother instantly."

Kadru released his mother from slavery then and there.

Garuda spoke to Kadru, "This nectar will be effective only when you drink it tomorrow morning after taking a bath." Kadru agreed to his suggestion, and kept the pot at a safe place.

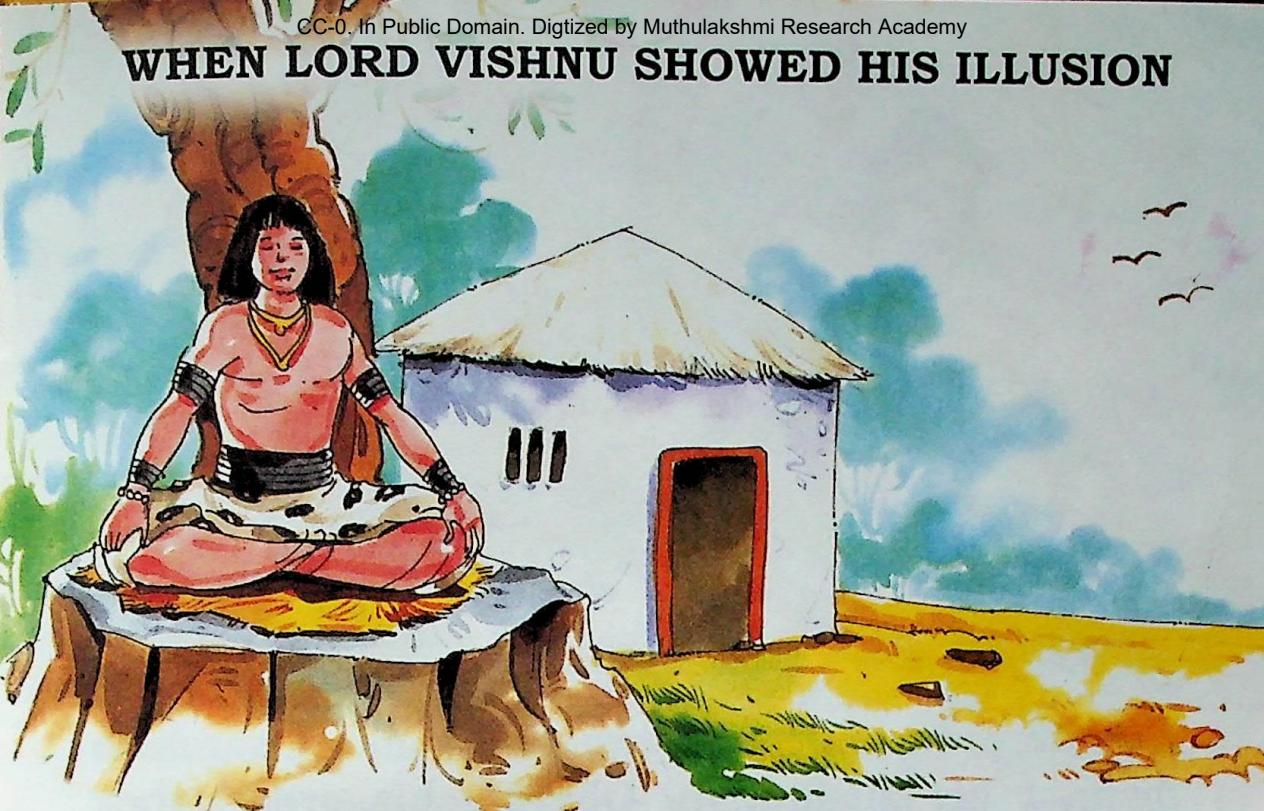
At night, when all the serpents were asleep, Indra came secretly and took the pot to its appropriate place in heaven. Next day, when the serpents did not find the nectar pot there, they started licking the place where the pot was kept. In doing so their tongues were divided into two.

Then Lord Vishnu appeared before Garuda and said, "Garuda, I am extremely pleased to see your devotion towards your mother. So, you will be my vehicle from today onwards."

Garuda spoke with joined hands, "Lord! I am very fortunate that you have chosen me as your vehicle. Now I your attendant, is at your commands."

Thus, Garuda became Lord Vishnu's vehicle due to his sincere devotion towards his mother. All the gods also praised Garuda for his devotion to his mother.

WHEN LORD VISHNU SHOWED HIS ILLUSION

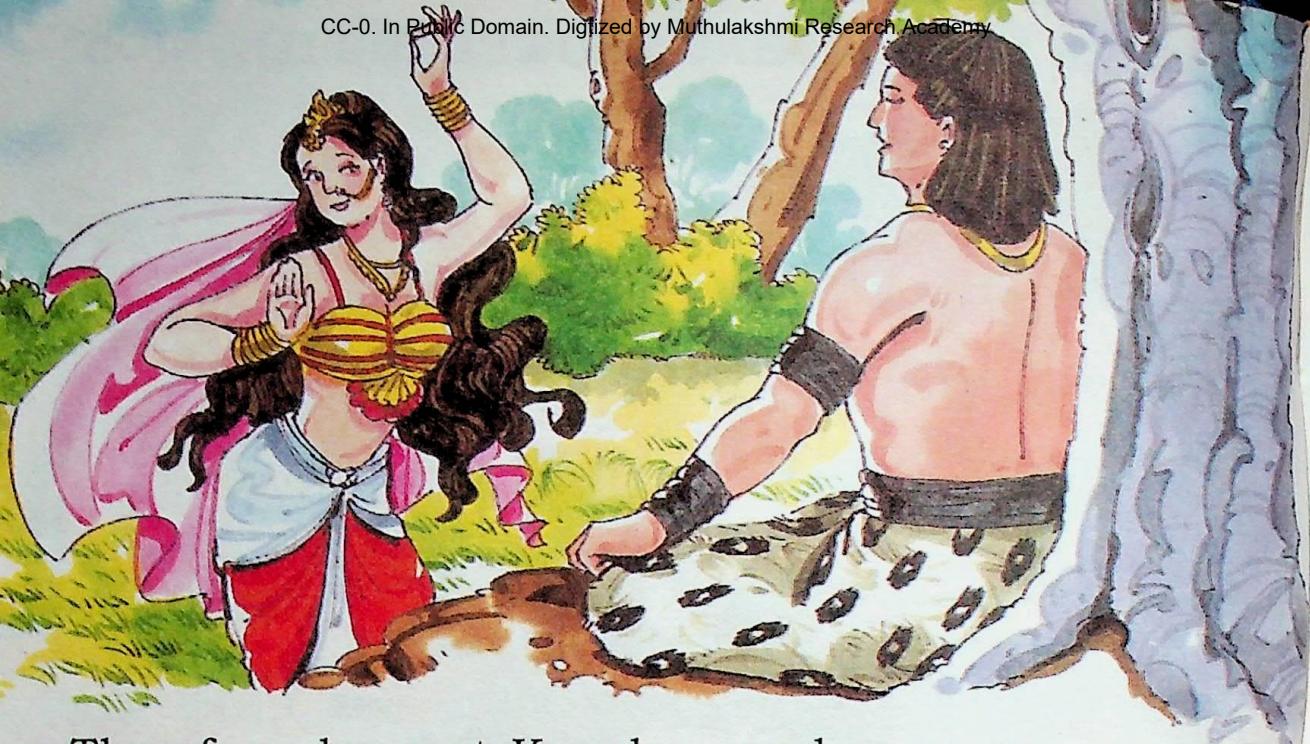


There were many notable saints, sages and hermits in the ancient times. But the hermit Mrikand holds a prominent place among them. He had a son Markandeya who was very pious and virtuous. He had vowed to practise celibacy. He had long hair and wore clothes made of bark. He held a kamandal (a holy pot) in one hand, and a stout stick in the other. He spent most of his time in meditation.

One day he said to his father, "Father, please allow me to perform *tapa* so that I can please the gods, Nar and Narayan."

His father, allowed him to do so. Markandeya went to the Himalayas and made his Ashram at Chitrashila near the river Pushpbhadra.

There he started worshipping Nar and Narayan. Indra became jealous of him and thought that Markandeya was worshipping to capture his throne.



Therefore, he sent Kamdeva and some apsaras to distract his meditation. Obeying his order, they reached Markandeya's Ashram and spread their illusive effects to interrupt his worship. But Kamdeva could not succeed in his mission. Markandeya continued his meditation.

Finally, Kamadeva and the apsaras returned. Indra had no option left so he left everything on its fate.

At last Markandeya's meditation bore fruit. The gods, Nar and Narayan appeared before him, and said, "Markandeya, what boon do you wish for?"

Markandeya bowed before him and spoke with joined hands, "Gods, you are the lord of this universe. I want to view your *Maya* (illusion that created this world)."

"So it be! Soon you will see what you desire", after this Nar and Narayan disappeared.

Having been blessed by Nar and Narayan,

Markandeya was very happy and started living at his *Ashram*. One day the weather changed. Black dense clouds appeared in the sky and it rained heavily with violent windstorm. Soon the whole earth was submerged in water.

When Markandeya's *Ashram* submerged, he came out and walked in water, towards the mountain. He was surprised to see the water-level which touched his feet but could not submerge him.

When the water level decreased he moved downwards and walked ahead to see the effect of *Pralaya*. As far as his sight could reach he found water everywhere. But to the grace of the gods he could move fearlessly in the water.

He had no effect of this *Pralaya*. Not a single living being was seen as he wandered here and there. He saw a banyan tree nearby.

He thought of taking shelter on it until the *Pralaya* (deluge) subsided.

Thinking so, he climbed the tree and sat on a sturdy branch. He felt quite relieved.

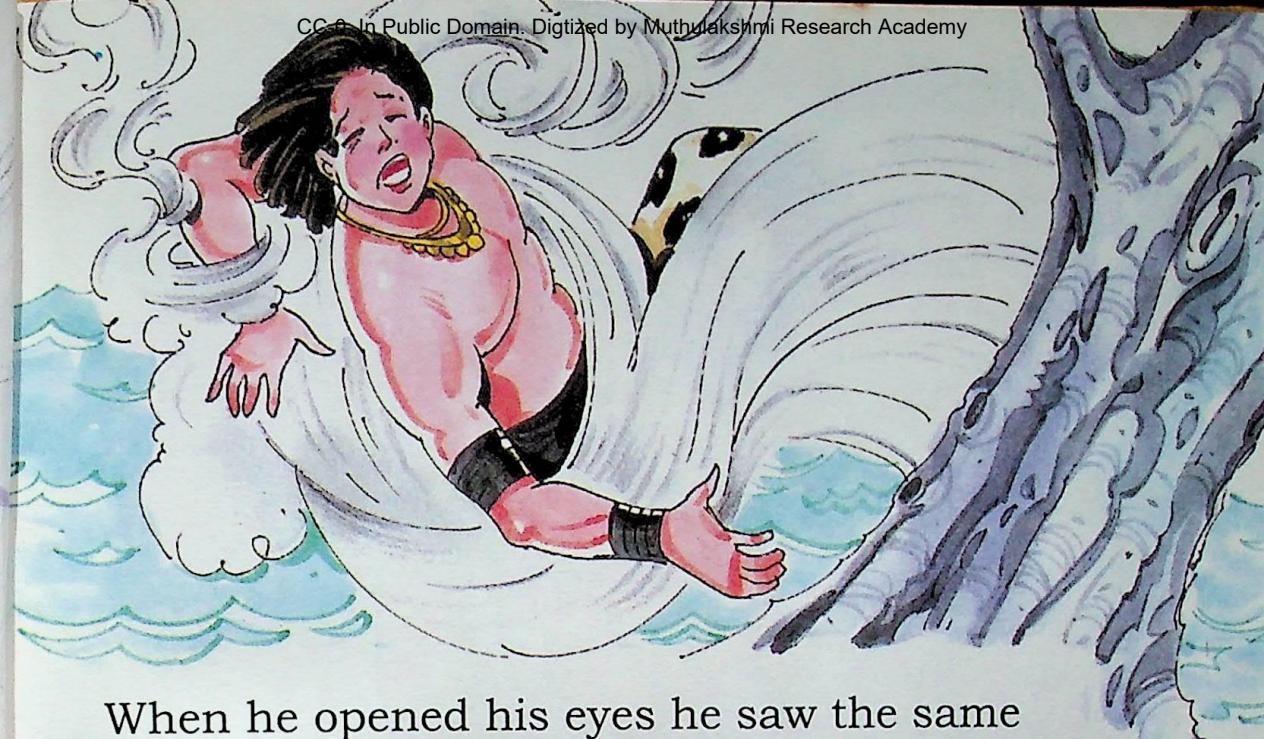




Suddenly, he saw a little child lying amidst the clumps of leaves. He thought the child must have been carried by the flood waters. As he moved towards the child he saw a strange shine on the face of the child. It seemed as if the God himself had appeared in the form of the child.

As soon as Markandeya bent down to pick the child up, the child in return pulled Markandeya, into his mouth. He found a world in the child's belly. Suddenly there came a storm and Markandeya was blown out like a twig.

The storm brought him back on the banyan tree.



When he opened his eyes he saw the same scene of the *Pralaya*. But the child was nowhere in sight. No sooner did he recover from his experiences than he saw a bright clear sky.

When he climbed down the tree, he saw Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati travelling in the air sitting on Nandi. He called them out.

Lord Shiva neared him and asked, "Son, what's the matter?"

He spoke with joined hands, "Lord, what's this *Maya*? Just now the scene of a *Pralaya* appeared and then vanished, as if nothing has happened. Please, reveal the truth to me."

Lord Shiva said, "Son, remember that you had requested Nar and Narayan to show you the *Maya*. So this was the *Maya*."

He wondered, "OK! I understand now, but who was the child lying amidst the clumps of leaves near the

banyan tree?"

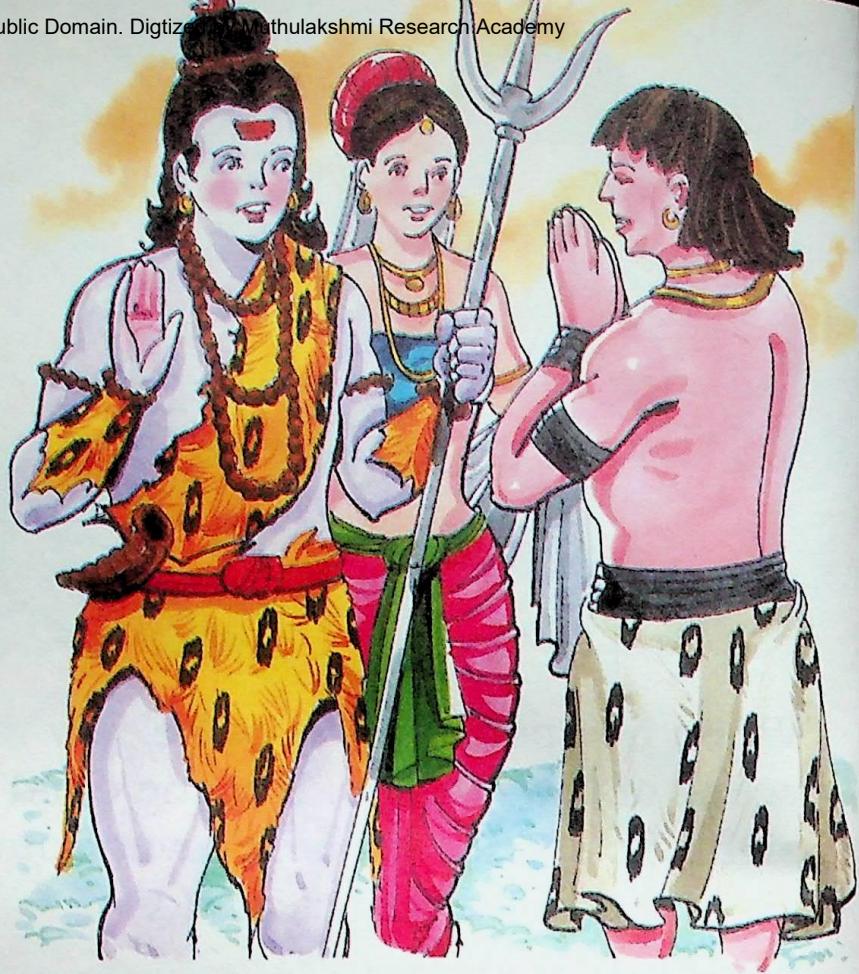
"He was Lord Vishnu himself," Lord Shiva said.

Markandeya asked, "It means that Nar and Narayan and Vishnu, the trio is one."

Shiva said, "Yes, you are right. Nar and Narayan are forms of Lord Vishnu. More precisely, Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh are three forms of Parbrahma (the formless God). We have different duties but our origin is the same. Brahma creates the world, Vishnu nurtures it and Mahesh i.e. I destroy it."

Markandeya fell at Lord Shiva's feet and said, "I was ignorant of everything but now everything is clear to me."

Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati then vanished with Nandi. Thereafter, Markandeya devoted his entire life in the meditation of God. In the end he got a place in the Vaikunth Loka.



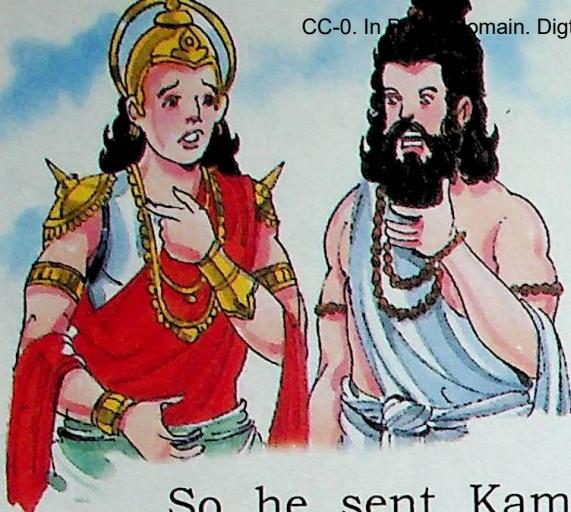
GOD VISHNU BROKE NARADA'S DELUSION



Sage Narada was the son of Brahma. After completing his education, Narada went to his father Brahma and asked, "Father, with your blessings I have gained thorough knowledge. Now advise me what I should do further."

Brahma spoke, "Son, following celibacy wander all around the universe, and help the poor and the needy."

"Father, I shall do as you have suggested." Narada took blessings of his father and started on his journey playing Veena and chanting *Narayana Narayana*. On reaching the mount Kailash, he started *tapasya*. Gods' king, Indra doubted Narada's intentions. He went to the *guru* (teacher) Brihaspati, and said, "Guru, when Narada has vowed to practise celibacy renouncing all the worldly



pleasures, why is he meditating?"

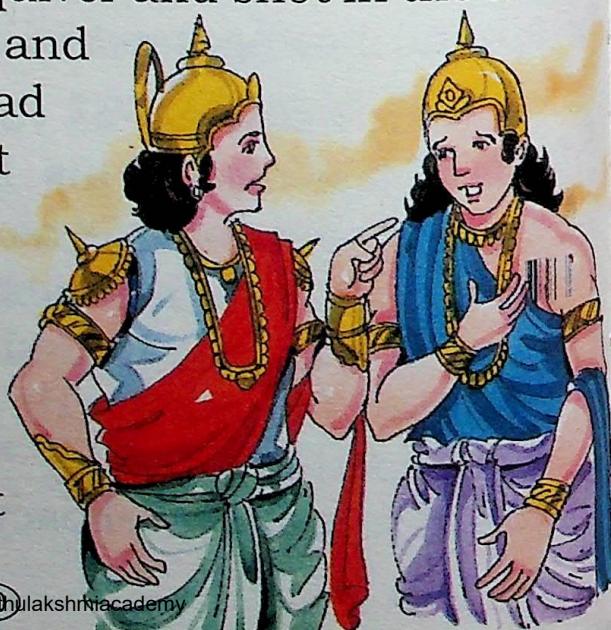
Brihaspati said, "Anyone can worship Lord Vishnu."

Indra was still suspicious of Narada that he wanted to get the throne of the heaven.

So he sent Kamdeva and some apsaras of heaven to put an end to Narada's *tapasya*. But listening to the name of the mount Kailash, Kamdeva hesitated, "O Lord, once at your command I had gone there to disturb Lord Shiva's meditation at Kailash, but his wrath burnt me alive. I fear Lord Shiva's fury."

Then Indra said, "Kamdeva, don't fear. You don't have to face Narada but only spread your Mohini Maya (charms) all around there. Rest of the work will be executed by the dancers."

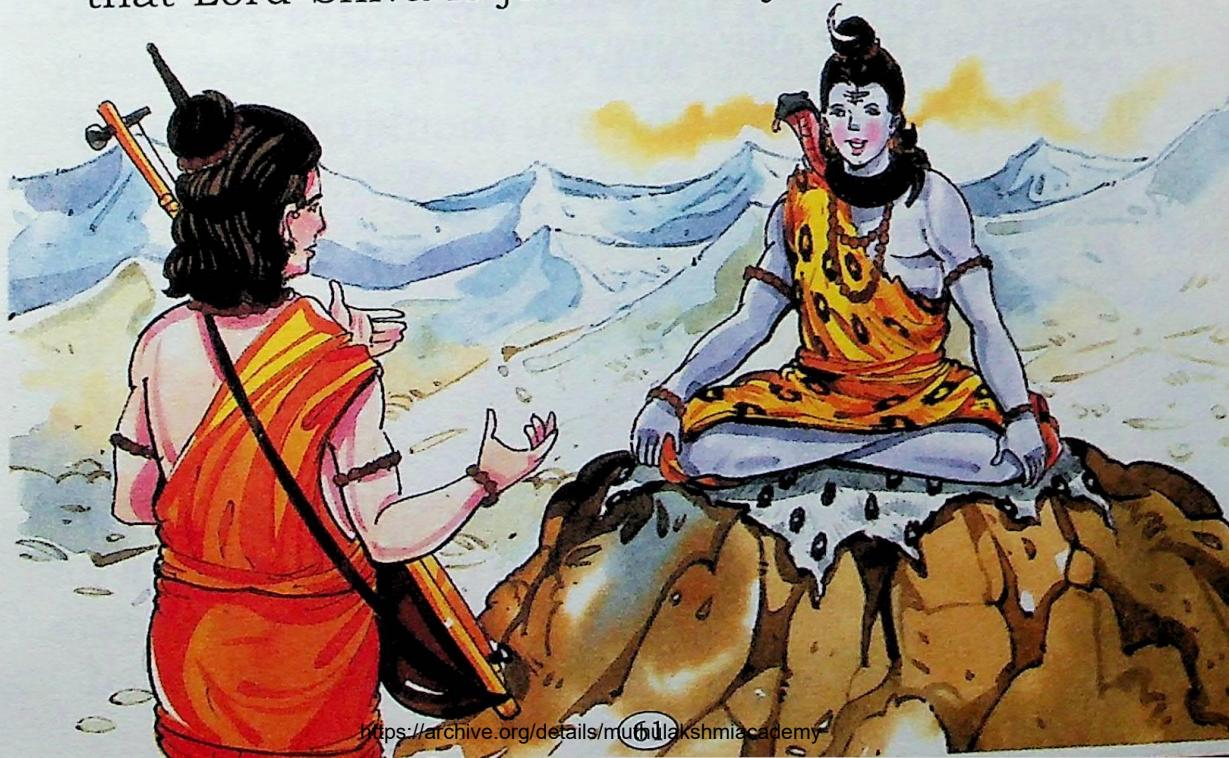
Kamdeva reached Kailash with some apsaras, the heavenly dancers. He took an arrow, charmed with Mohini Mantra, out of his quiver and shot in the air. As a result a pleasant and fragrant atmosphere spread all around. Then he shot the second arrow whereby a divine melodious music spread in the environment, and the apsaras started dancing. Kamdeva waited for Narada. But



Narada remained unaffected. He remained static. Tired apsaras went back to heaven. But Kamdeva remained there. When Narada's *tapa* was over he opened his eyes and found Kamdeva at his feet. Kamdeva apologized for all that he had done. Sage Narada said, "To cause disturbance in one's *tapasya* is not a good deed, however, I forgive you. But in future you must not do such a work."

Now Narada thought himself to be a very powerful man, as he had defeated Kamdeva. He decided to inform Lord Shiva of his achievement. Arrogantly Narada reached Kailash, bowed to Lord Shiva and said, "God, at this very mountain I performed *tapasya* and even Kamdeva couldn't do anything."

God Shiva said, "Good! Conquering Kamdeva is really a hard job. But don't tell this to anyone else otherwise they will make fun of you." Narada took leave from him. On the way, he thought, 'It seems that Lord Shiva is jealous of my success. I should





inform Lord Vishnu of my success.'

He then went to Lord Vishnu and said, "Lord, like Lord Shiva I have also conquered Kamdeva."

"It's a very good news. But you should be careful in future, as it can't be predicted exactly when and what will happen in future," spoke Lord Vishnu.

"Okay, I will keep your advice in mind", saying so Narada went away.

Lord Vishnu knew that Narada was very proud of his success. He decided to teach him a lesson. So he spread his *Mohini Maya* and created an attractive city. When Narada peeped down from above, he saw a marvellous city! He descended to view it. He asked

a man there, “How wonderful your city is! Who is its king?”

“Maharaja Sheel Nidhi”, the man replied.

Sage Narada said, “I want to meet the king. Can you tell me where the palace is?”

The man accompanied him to the gate of the palace. Maharaja Sheel Nidhi welcomed Narada at the palace, and seated him on a royal seat. He introduced his daughter to him. The princess folded her hands and honoured him. But Narada for a moment was dumbstruck to see her beauty.

He said to the king, “O king, I have never seen such a beautiful damsel. She deserves to be married to Lord Vishnu Himself!”

“Yes, I do hope so. Two days from now, I have arranged a Swayamvar for my daughter. Whoever she selects will marry her”, said the king. Narada took leave of the king and went away. But Narada’s mind was not at peace after seeing the princess.

He wanted

to marry

her.

Therefore,

he medi-

tated

on Lord

Vishnu

for a while

and there



appeared Lord Vishnu and said, "Narada, what made you remember me?"

Narada spoke, "Lord, I want a face like Hari to marry a beautiful princess."

Lord Vishnu spoke, "Narada, the quality of beauty and ugliness is felt according to one's inner feelings. However, if you wish so, I grant you the face of Hari."

Narada could not understand the different meanings of the word 'Hari'. Hari is the name not only of Lord Vishnu but also used as synonymous for a monkey.

So, Lord Vishnu made Narada's face like that of a monkey. When Narada reached the *Swayamvar* hall with a monkey-face, all the persons present there laughed out loudly. But Narada thought he was looking very smart, so he sat boldly. After a while the

princess came in with a *Varmala* (a garland for the groom) in her hand. When she passed by Narada, he bent his head



thinking, the princess would put the garland around his neck. But the princess turned away.

She taunted, "What a foolish monkey!"

Listening so, Narada stood up in anger, walked out of the *Swayamvar*, and looked at his face in a pond. Seeing his face he got furious. When he came back he saw the princess was putting the *Varmala* around Lord Vishnu's neck. Narada burst out in fury and started abusing Lord Vishnu.

But Vishnu spoke smilingly, "Narada, why are you angry? What wrong have I done to hurt you so deeply?"

Narad shouted, "Oh! don't pretend to be so innocent. You know everything! You once had deceived the demons disguising yourself as Mohini, and now you have used the same trick on me."

Vishnu said, "I haven't done anything wrong." "Then tell me why did you give me the face of a



monkey? I had asked you for a charming face so that the princess might select me as her groom but you yourself married her,” cried Narada.

Lord Vishnu said, “Whom you do think as Sheel Nidhi’s daughter is Lakshmi, my wife?”

“Mother Lakshmi, in the form of a princess! So you have again deceived me!” Narada muttered.

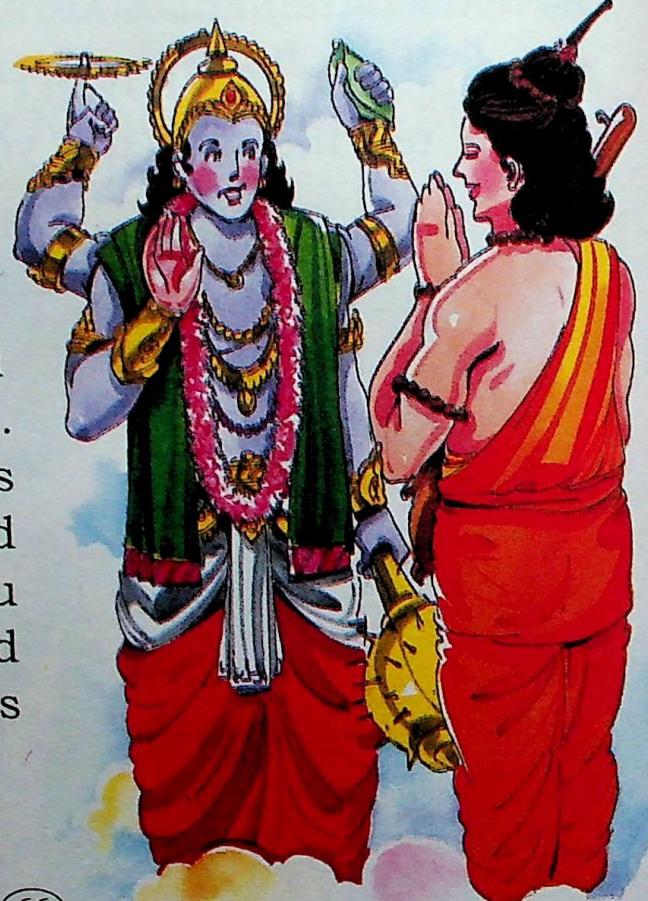
Lord Vishnu spoke, “Narada, it seems your eyes haven’t opened yet. Just see around you.” Narada was dumbstruck to see nothing but a desert there. Lord Vishnu said, “Narada, this all was my *Maya*. I wished to remove the false pride growing in you.”

“And what about this ‘Hari’ face?”

“You asked for a face like ‘Hari’, and I gave you the same. Perhaps you forgot that a monkey also is called ‘Hari.’”

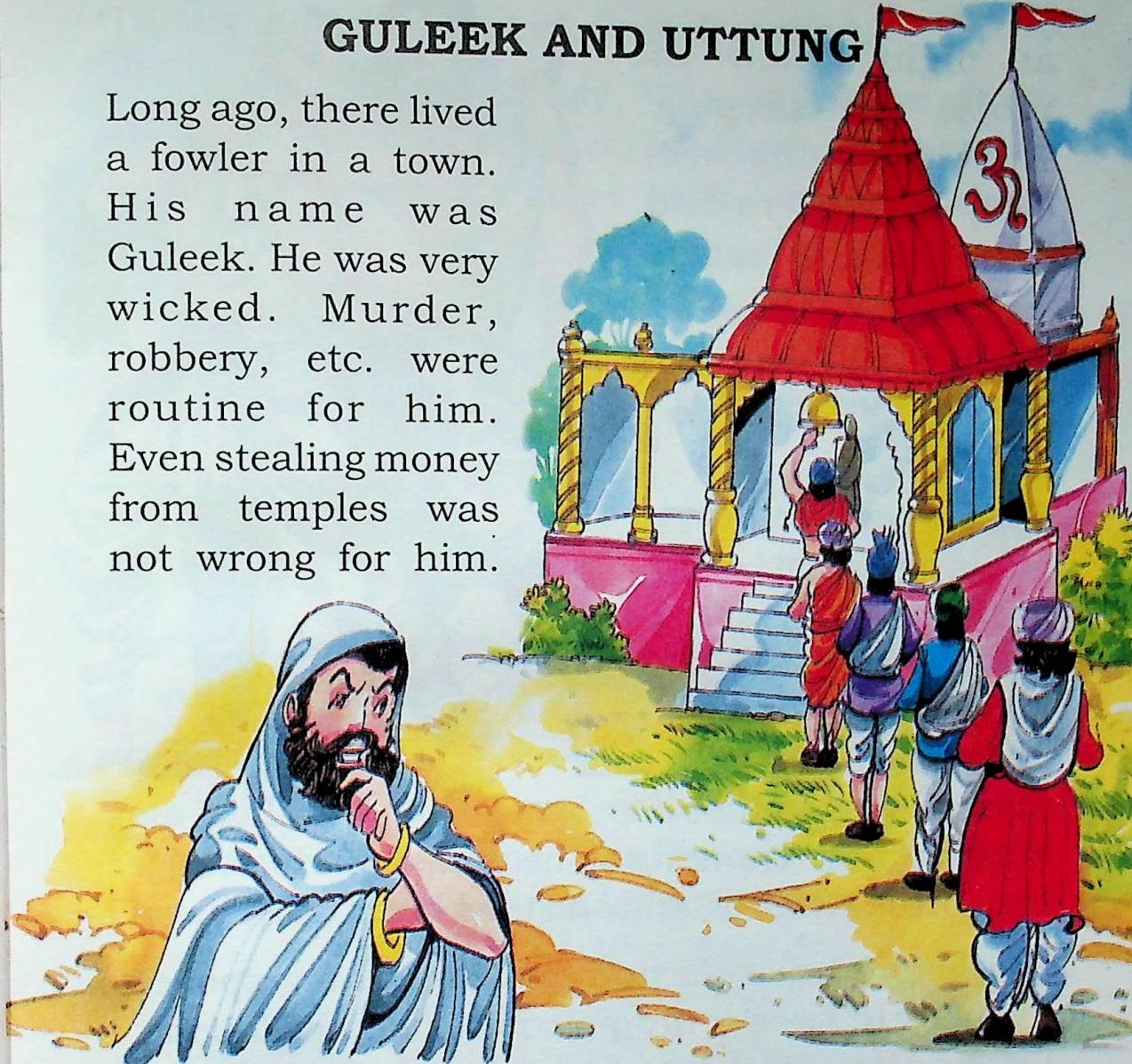
Narada’s arrogance was shattered. He asked Lord Vishnu for forgiveness.

He vowed that he would never be proud again. And he would always chant God’s name and help others. Lord Vishnu blessed him and disappeared with Goddess Lakshmi.



GULEEK AND UTTUNG

Long ago, there lived a fowler in a town. His name was Guleek. He was very wicked. Murder, robbery, etc. were routine for him. Even stealing money from temples was not wrong for him.

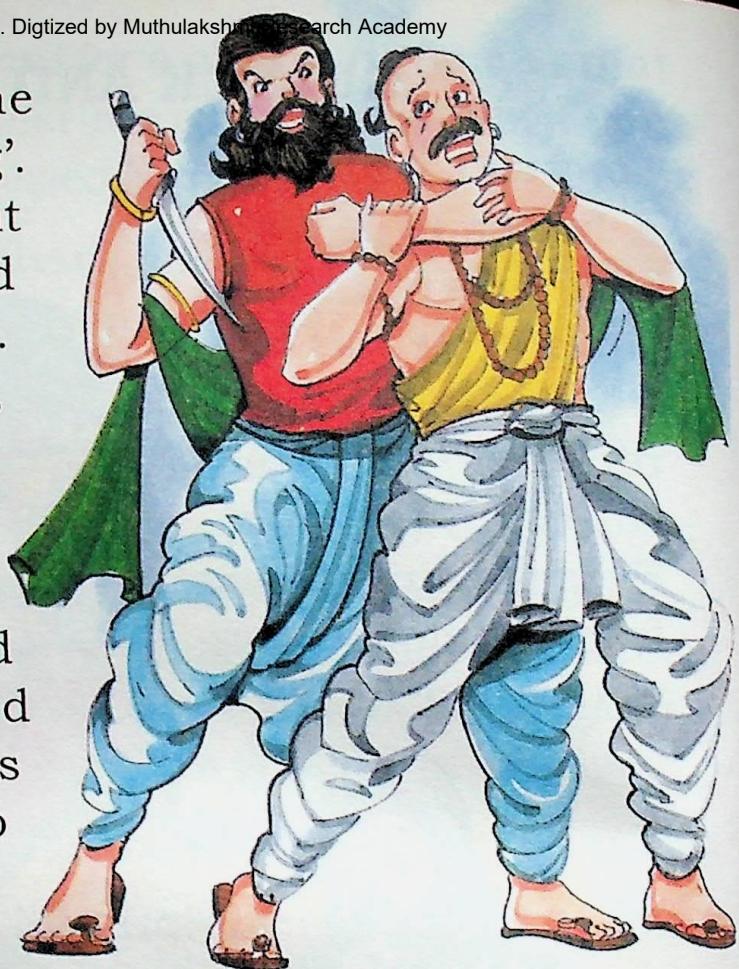


All day he would catch birds and at night he would rob and murder. It was his daily routine.

Once Guleek reached a rich and prosperous town of the king Sauveer Raj. He roamed in the streets during the day and lastly aimed to commit a theft in the temple of Lord Vishnu which was decorated with gold ornaments.

He thought, 'If I could steal even a bit from this temple, I will have enough money. I shall steal here

at night when the people are sleeping'. Thinking so, he went away from there and came back at night. He found Uttung, a brahmin boy worshipping at that moment.



Guleek was surprised to see him and thought, 'What is this youth doing here so late at night! I can't steal in his presence, so I must kill him first.' Thinking so he pulled out his dagger, held Uttung from behind and tried to cut off his head.

But before he could do anything Uttung spoke to him, "Wait! Answer my question first, then kill me, if you find it right to do so."

Guleek was surprised at his boldness. He said, "Ask, whatever you want to ask. Because I don't have much time to waste."

Uttung asked, "What do you get after harming or killing others? Guleek said, "Wealth, and what else? I commit all these acts only for money."

"Okay, but have you ever tried to think that our good or bad acts accompany us even after our death?"

"I never thought about it", Guleek replied.

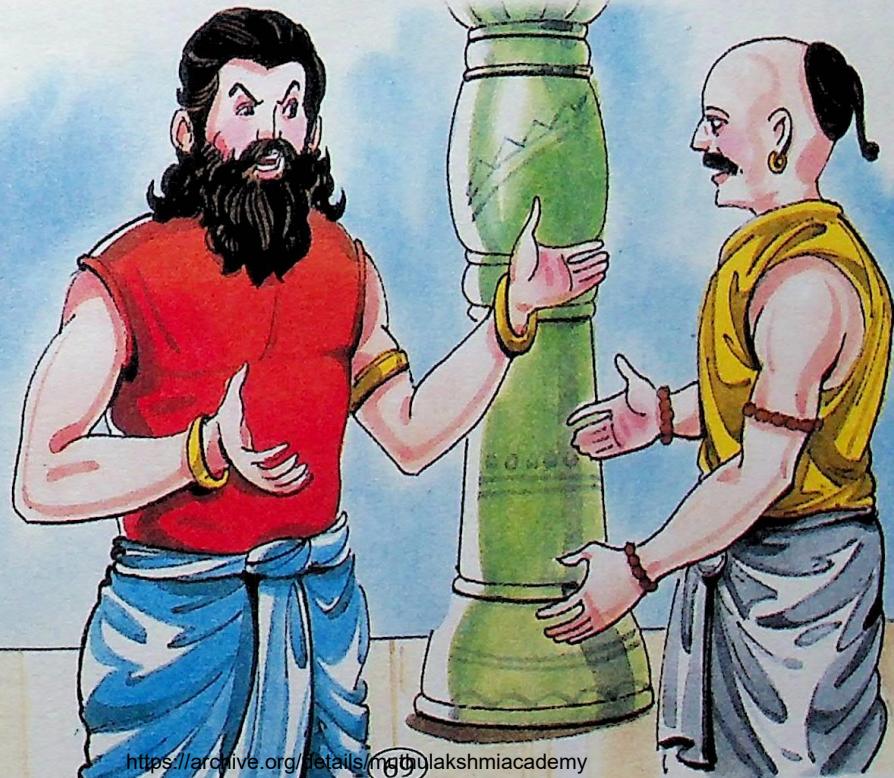
Uttung spoke convincingly, "Then think over it my friend! The lifestyle that you lead is worse than the worst. Even animals never harm anyone without reason."

"It means you compare me with animals! How foolish you are! Despite knowing that your life is in my hand, you dare to speak so!" Guleek roared angrily.

Uttung replied politely, "Friend, whoever is born will die one day or the other. Then why to fear death! It's useless to fear death."

"Let it be, but if I give up the acts which you say are sinful, how will I get my living?"

"Every creature of this world, even flies, germs, etc. gets food from that almighty God. He provides food for everyone, then how can He keep you hungry? Have faith in Him. Acknowledge His power."



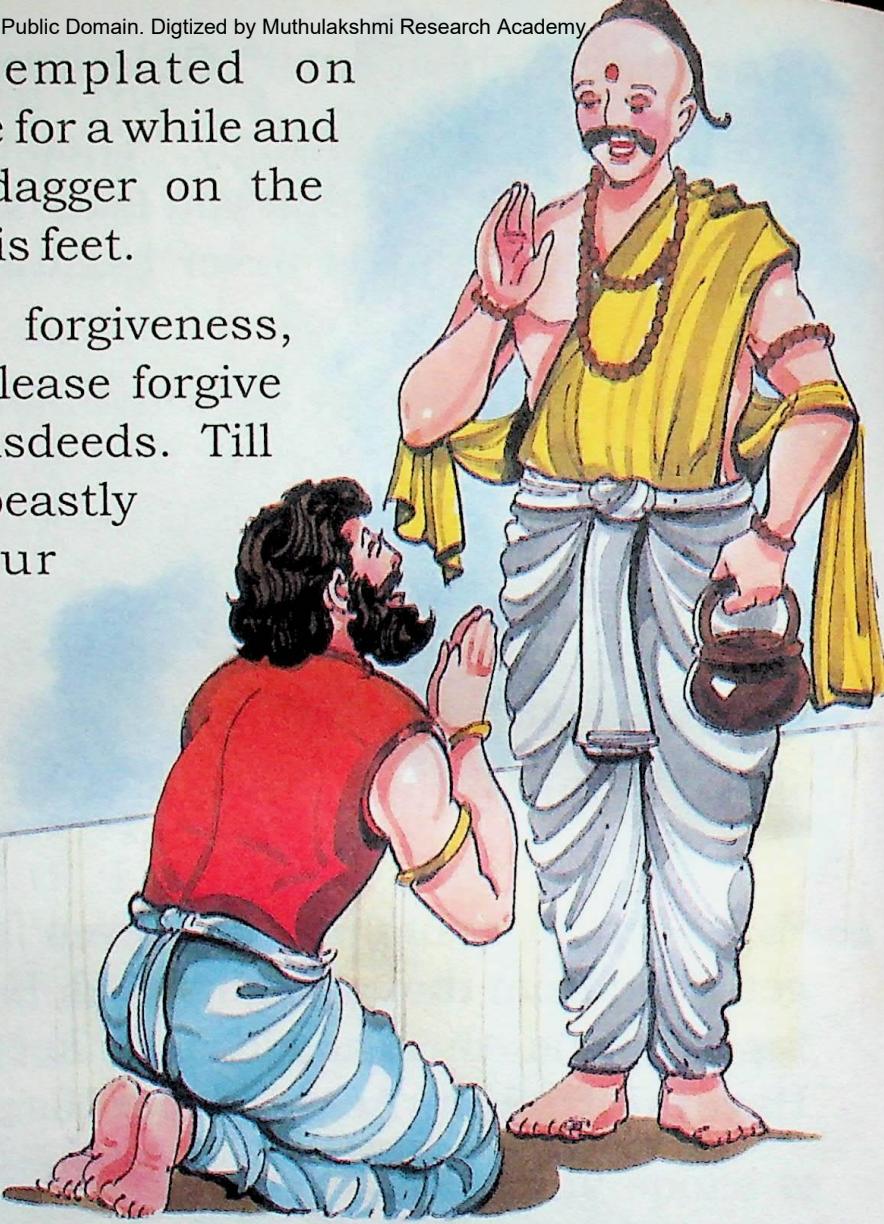
Guleek contemplated on Uttung's advice for a while and throwing his dagger on the ground fell at his feet.

He begged for forgiveness, "O brahmin, please forgive me for my misdeeds. Till now I led a beastly life, but your words have opened my eyes."

Uttung lifted him up and said, "It is enough that you have realised your guilt. I am pleased that you are conscience finally."

Guleek asked, "O brahmin, guide me now, what's your advice for me?" Uttung said, "Follow the path of truth, serve others selflessly, and chant the name of God."

Now Guleek changed his life completely. He followed the moral and pious way of living. Nothing wrong existed in him. He worshiped Vishnu everyday, and told others the magnificence of God. He would help the poor and the needy. Thus, he attained final abode to Vaikunth due to the grace of Lord Vishnu.



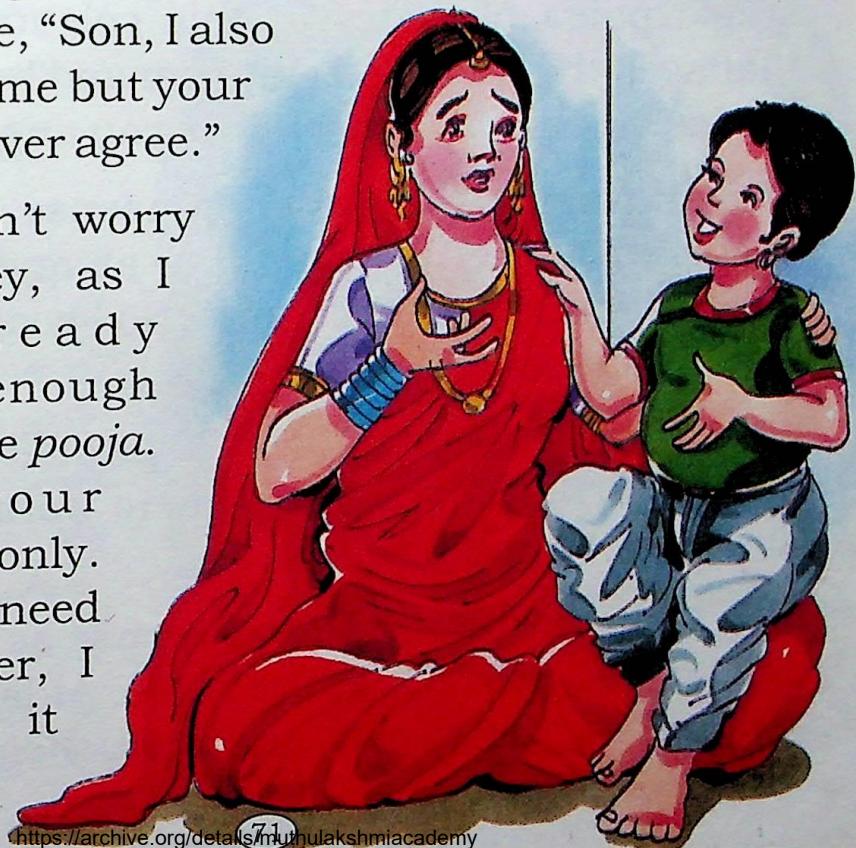
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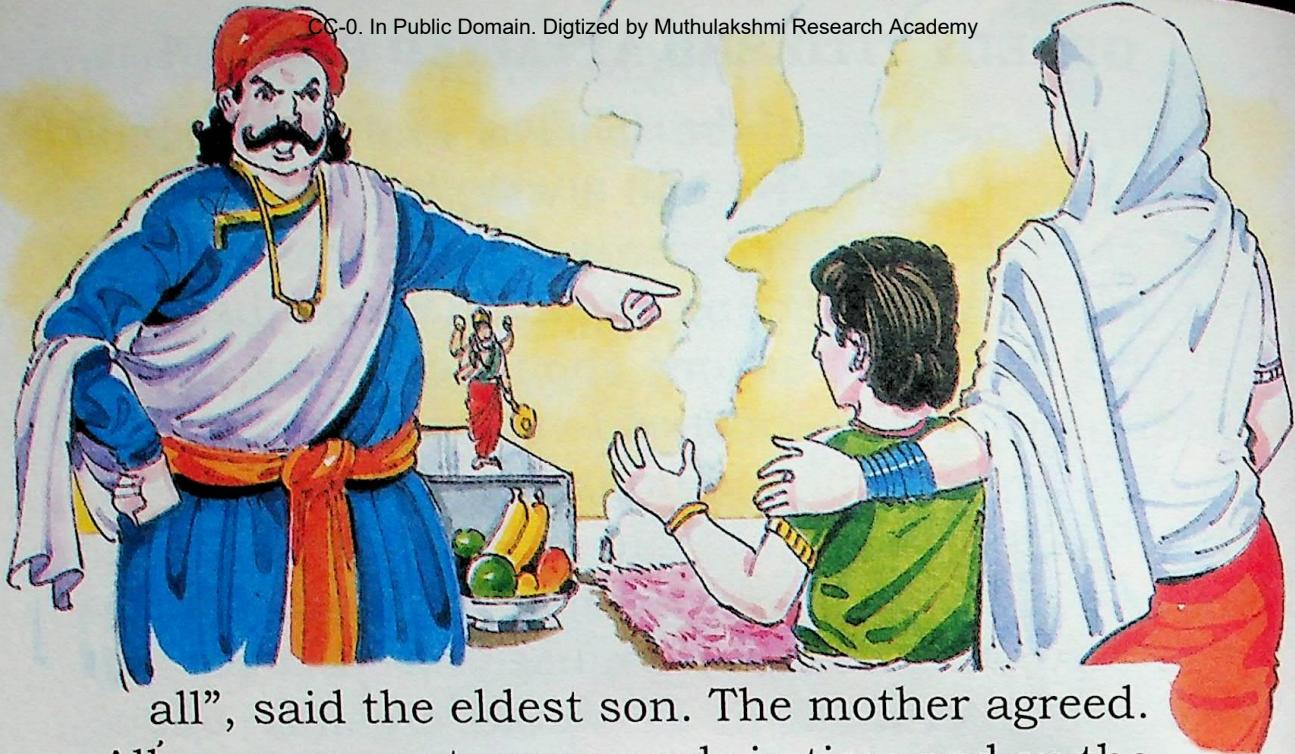
GREEDY TITIKSHU ATTAINED HEAVEN

A long time ago, there lived a brahmin named Titikshu at Ujjain. He had a wife, two sons, and a daughter. He was very greedy. If his wife or children would ask for something, he would ignore them. He did not want that anyone should ever visit him. If some guest ever happened to come he would keep muttering showing his unhappiness to the guest. His family members would request him a lot for money and other things but to no avail. On the contrary he would spend profusely on other women. For self-entertainment he would organise dance parties and spend money lavishly.

One day his eldest son requested his mother, "Mother, it's been a long time since we had God Satya-Narayan's *Pooja* celebration at home. If you say, I will organise it on this *poornima* only." His mother spoke, "Son, I also desire the same but your father will never agree."

"Mother, don't worry about money, as I have already collected enough money for the *pooja*. I need your permission only. There is no need to ask father, I will manage it





"all", said the eldest son. The mother agreed. All arrangements were made in time and on the day when the *pooja* started, Titikshu burst out in anger, "Oh! Without my permission you have organised the *pooja*!"

The son spoke, "Father, I have not used even a single paisa of yours in this celebration. I have managed the money on my own and have organised this celebration. Then why are you angry?"

Titikshu said, "Stop your nonsense. You dare to argue with me, despite living at my house! Stop your hypocrisy right now. No *pooja* would be celebrated here."

Thereafter Titikshu's wife requested him, "Don't say so my lord. It's not wrong to worship God. Let the *pooja* be performed."

But all her requests were of no use as the brahmin insisted on dismissing the *pooja*. At last, the priest as well as the guests left from there. The *pooja*

celebration remained incomplete. With this incident his family members were very sad. The gods in the heaven were so enraged with his cruelty that they decided to teach a lesson to the brahmin.

God Agni said to Indra, "We should not let the family of the brahmin suffer for the misdoing of the brahmin. None other than he himself is responsible for the pooja that could not be performed. His family members have firm faith in God. So they must be spared."

Indra, said, "O God Agni, they will not suffer. You instantly put it in his wife's mind that she should move to her paternal house with her children leaving her husband."

Then God Agni did the same, and Titikshu's wife left for her paternal house with all her children.

The next day a close friend of Titikshu came to him and said, "Friend, I need some money for an urgent work. You are my only friend, so I have come straight to



you. I will repay your money soon.”

Titikshu thought for a while and said, “Okay, I will help you, but you must repay me soon.”

“Certainly! I will repay your money with interest at the earliest.” said his friend. Thus, he took a heavy amount of money and left. But he never came back.

One day some thieves entered the brahmin’s house and took all his wealth away. Titikshu was extremely shocked with the theft. But no one came to console him. Titikshu had hardly got over the theft yet, when his house caught fire. He went out of his house crying for help but again nobody came to his help. Titikshu sank in grief and began to pass his days sorrowfully. A large amount of his money was taken away by his friend, a great amount of wealth was stolen, and the rest was destroyed by fire.

One day two soldiers came to him and said, “Titikshu, the king has summoned you to the royal court. You are accused of not paying the taxes for years.”

Titikshu could not understand anything. Soldiers arrested him, and presented him before the king in the royal court. The king asked him the reason of not paying the taxes. He didn’t answer anything. The king ordered his soldiers to forfeit all his belongings to make up for the taxes.

Now Titikshu was not less than a beggar wandering in the streets. His clothes were dirty and torn. Children would throw stones at him thinking him to be mad. Wandering here and there he happened to





reach a temple. He was dying of thirst and hunger. The priest of the temple was a kind man. He gave him shelter and fed him affectionately. Knowing all about him he said, "It's the result of all your misdeeds." Titikshu fell at his feet and asked, "O priest, now tell me what I should do. How should I do to repent for my sins?"

The priest lifted Titikshu up and said, "If you do penance with pure and sincere heart, God will definitely forgive you. Take shelter from Lord Vishnu, chant His name, and help the needy."

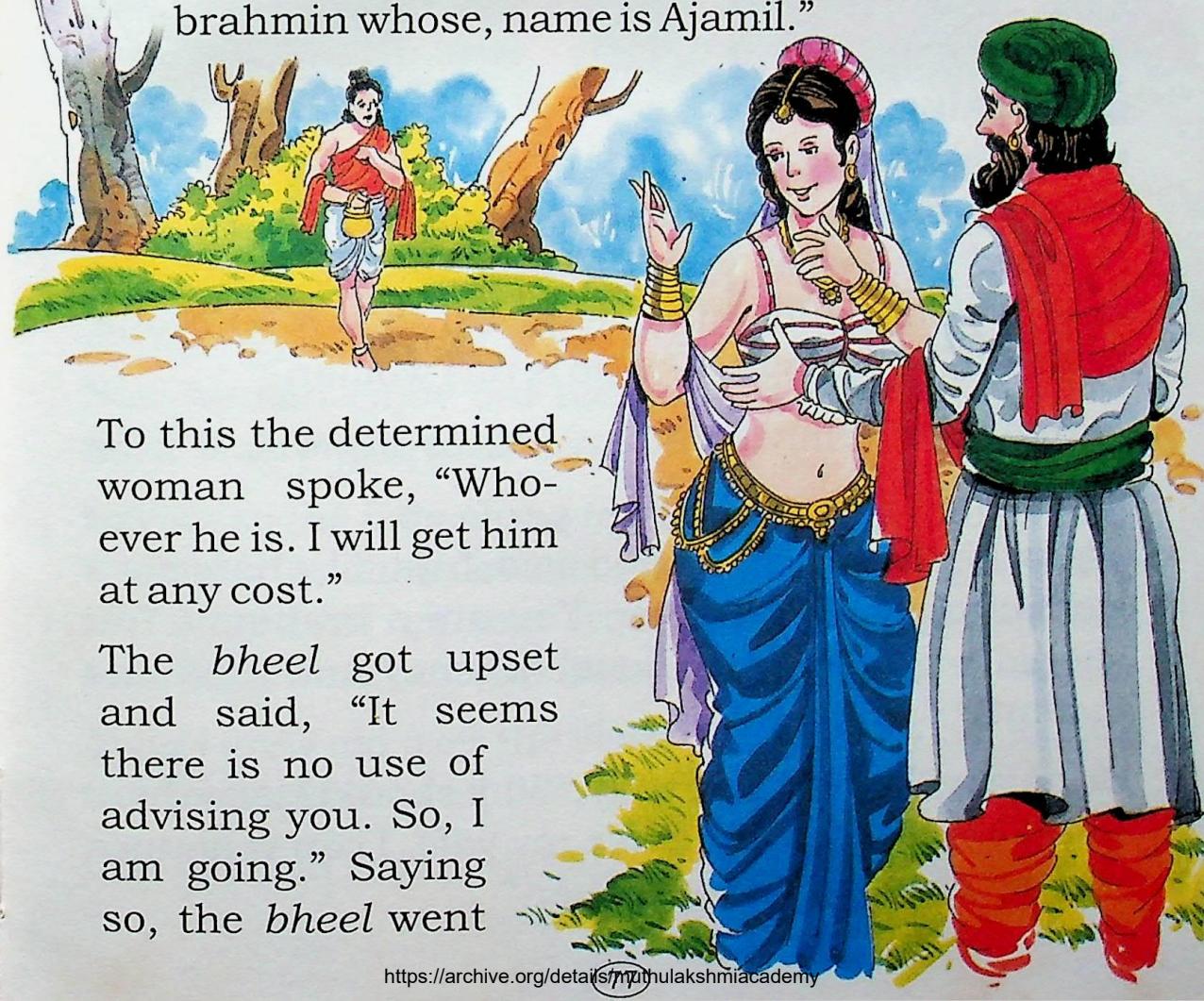
Henceforth, the life of Titikshu changed completely. He wore saffron clothes, chanted God's name, recited pious verses, and began to preach others to lead a humble and moral life. Once he reached his town chanting the name of Lord Vishnu. People welcomed him with great respect. After his death he attained heaven by the grace of Lord Vishnu.

SINFUL AJAMIL ATTAINED VAIKUNTH

It's an account from our ancient mythology. There was a youth named Ajamil. His father was a very devout man, and worshipped Lord Vishnu, God Agni, and Sun god according to the scriptures. He inculcated moral values into Ajamil. Ajamil would take care of his parents very much and obey them. One day when he was bringing flowers from the woods, he saw a beautiful woman coming with a *bheel*. He instantly fell in love with her. The woman was also attracted towards him and said to the *bheel*, "The youth is very charming. I wish I could get him!" The *bheel* said, "Nonsense! He is a very devout brahmin whose name is Ajamil."

To this the determined woman spoke, "Whoever he is. I will get him at any cost."

The *bheel* got upset and said, "It seems there is no use of advising you. So, I am going." Saying so, the *bheel* went



away. The woman then stood on Ajamil's way and said, "O youth! I have accepted you as my husband in my heart. Please you too accept me as your wife. I assure you I will provide you all the pleasures of life."

Ajamil kept mum but nodded in agreement. He kept on looking at the woman. He was trapped by her beauty. He lost interest in the religion and throwing the flowers reached his father with the woman. His father was angrily waiting for him. He asked in a rough tone, "Where are the flowers? Who is this woman?"

Ajamil said firmly, "Father, this is my wife. I have married her."

His father looked at her and said, "Ajamil, she is not a woman of good character. You are a brahmin. You should maintain your lineal decency and leave her instantly."

But Ajamil replied furiously, "Why should I leave her? Now I have accepted her as my wife. I can renounce you but I can not renounce her."



This made his father very shocked and angry. He decided to punish Ajamil and stepped towards him, but Ajamil stopped him. He caught hold of his father's hair, and pushed him on the ground.

He said, "You oldie! How dare you raise hand on me! Whatever I want will be done in this house. Go away from here if you don't like it." Stricken with grief, Ajamil's parents left the house.

Ajamil entered the house with the woman. The woman said, "It was wise of you to expell the oldies. Now we can enjoy our life thoroughly because now there is no one to interfere."

Saying so the lady clung to his neck. She taught him to gamble and drink wine. Both were leading a sinful life. Ajamil got ten sons from her. The youngest was named as Narayan. Ajamil loved Narayan very much.

Ajamil grew old over the years. One day he fell ill and two *yamadootas* came to fetch him.

One of them said, "Ajamil, your end has come near.

We have come to take your soul away. You have committed many sins. So your next residence is at hell. We will throw you there."

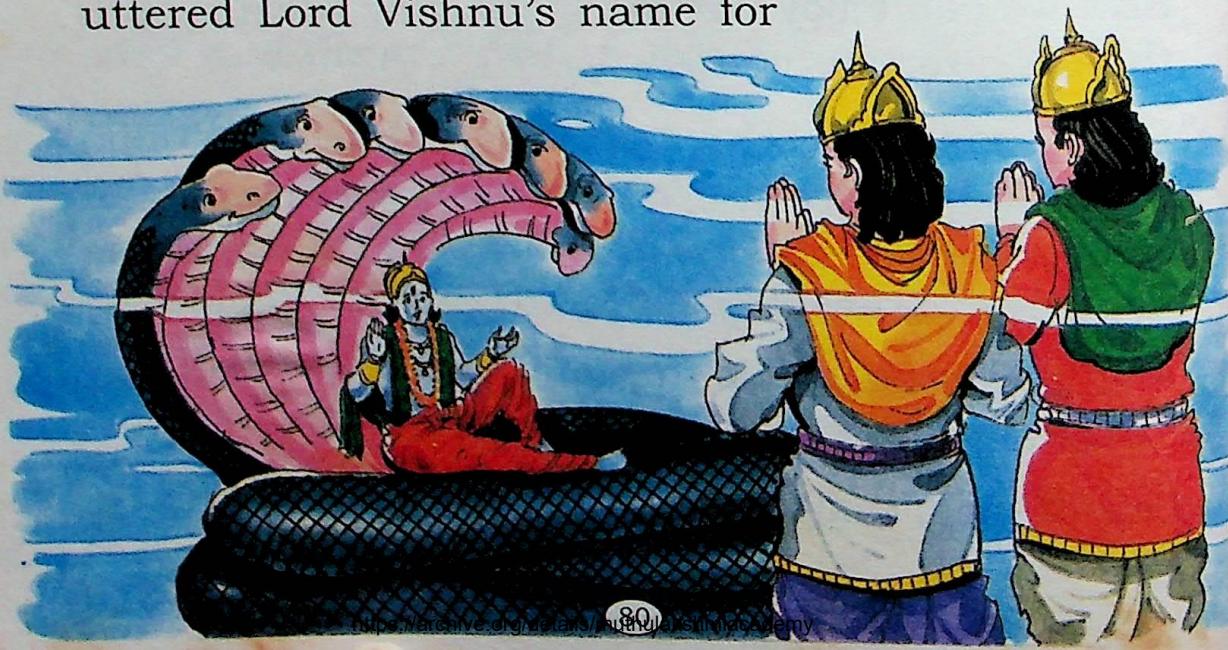
Hearing it Ajamil cried aloud, "Narayan,....., Narayan, help me. Yamdootas have come to take my life". God Narayan (Vishnu) heard his crying. He ordered his attendants to go to the earth and remove his devotee's sufferings.

Two attendants of Lord Vishnu reached Ajamil's home and forbade the *yamadootas* to take his life. The *yamadootas* asked the reason.

The attendants of Lord Vishnu said, "Because Lord Vishnu has told us to save him. This person is one of his devotees."

The *yamadootas* exclaimed, "Devotee! This man is extremely sinful! It is because of his sins that God Yama has ordered us to throw him into hell."

Lord Vishnu's attendants said, "We know nothing. We only know that you can't take his life. He has uttered Lord Vishnu's name for





protection.” The *yamadootas* returned and narrated the whole incident to Yama.

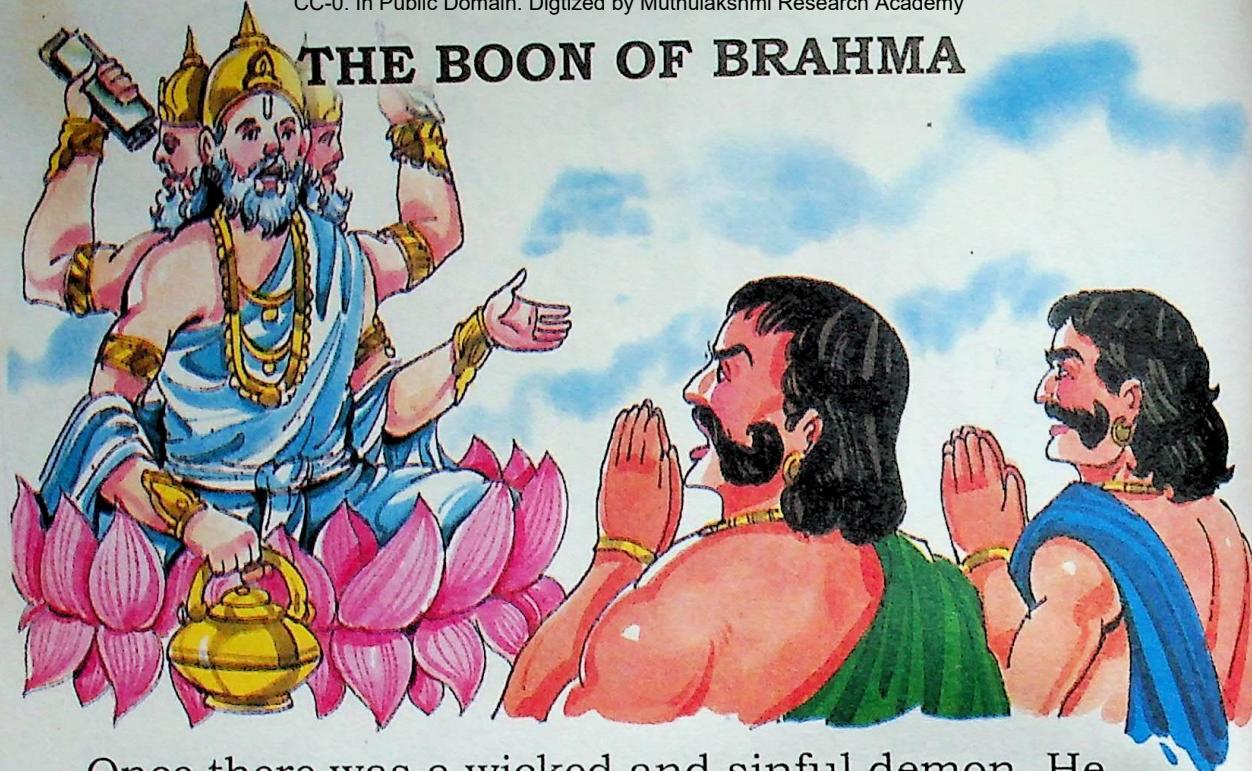
Yama said, “It’s all right if Lord Vishnu wishes so. But go there again after a year.”

By Lord Vishnu’s grace Ajamil regained his life. He had understood the importance of Lord Vishnu. He devoted himself in worshipping Him.

He left the worldly pleasures, made a hermitage at the bank of the holy Ganga, and lived there piously worshipping Lord Vishnu. Right after a year the *yamadootas* came to take his soul.

At the same moment Lord Vishnu’s attendants also reached there. They snatched Ajamil’s soul from their hands and took him straight to Vaikunth. Thus, sinful Ajamil attained Vaikunth by Lord Vishnu’s grace.

THE BOON OF BRAHMA

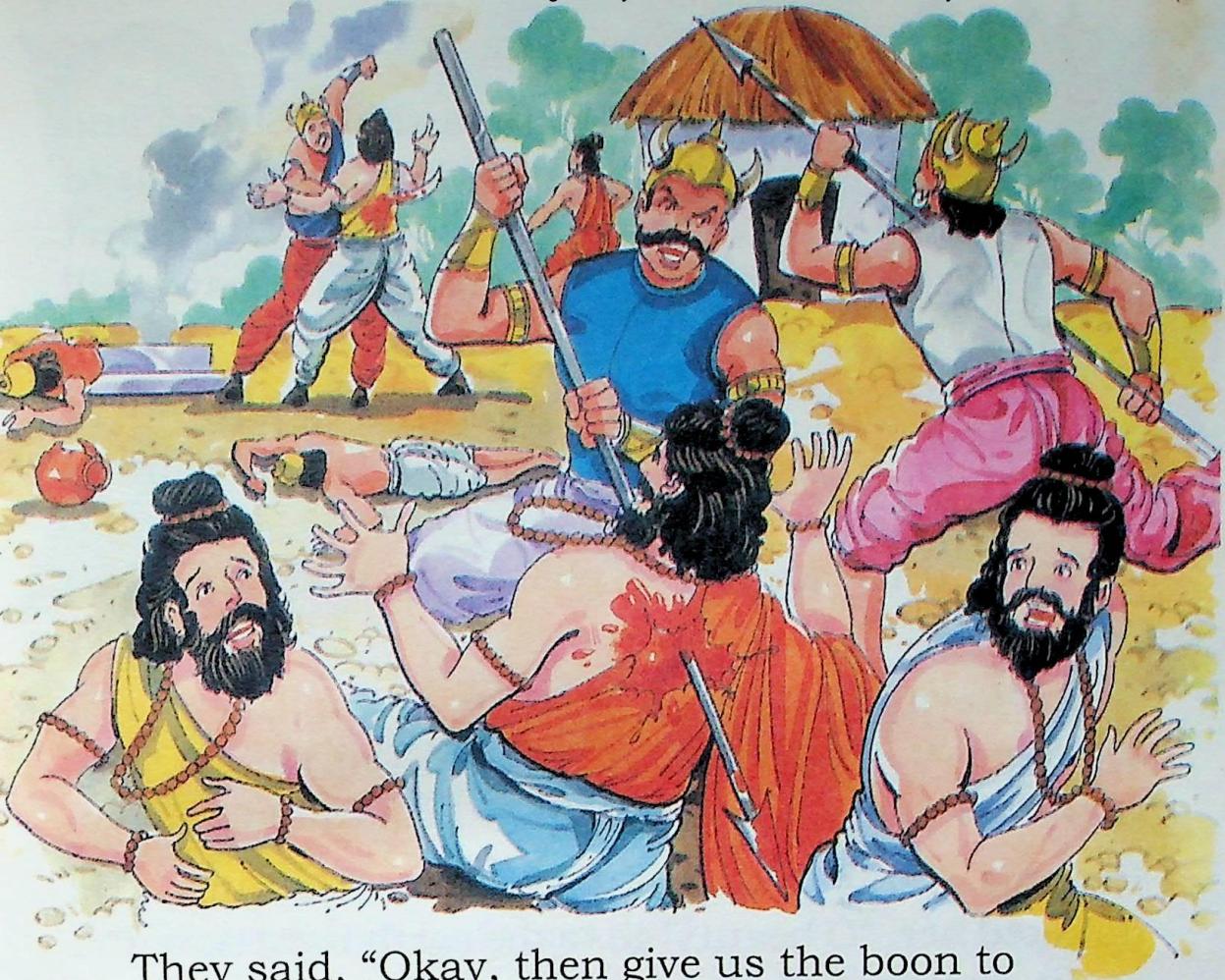


Once there was a wicked and sinful demon. He had two sons named Sunda and Upsunda. Both were brought up together. When they grew up they wished to win the three worlds. So they decided to worship Lord Brahma to boost their strength. Accordingly, both the demons went to the Vindhya mountains and started to perform severe *tapasya* there. The intensity of their *tapas* shook the heaven. When Indra saw it, he sent many gods to interrupt their meditation but to no avail.

Finally Brahma got pleased with them. He appeared before them and said, "I am pleased with you. Do ask for a boon."

Both the demons bowed to Brahma and said, "O Pitamaha, give us the boon of immortality."

Brahma said, "Ask for some other boon, because according to nature's law one who takes birth is bound to die one day or the other."



They said, "Okay, then give us the boon to die by each other's hands only. No one else can kill us."

Saying, "Amen!" Brahma disappeared.

Now both the demons became extremely haughty of their power. They considered themselves to be immortal. At first they conquered the earth which increased their arrogance. Then they set out for heaven. A ferocious battle broke out wherein the gods faced defeat. The oppressive acts of demons caused great havoc in the three worlds.

The gods reached Brahma and expressed their grief, "Pitamaha, having got boon from you, Sunda and Upsunda have made us suffer greatly. Please save us

from them.”



Brahma said, “Sunda and Upsunda have misused my boon. But, don’t worry. Soon death will embrace them.”

After the departure of gods Brahma called Vishvakarma and said, “Vishvakarma create a charming and beautiful damsel.”

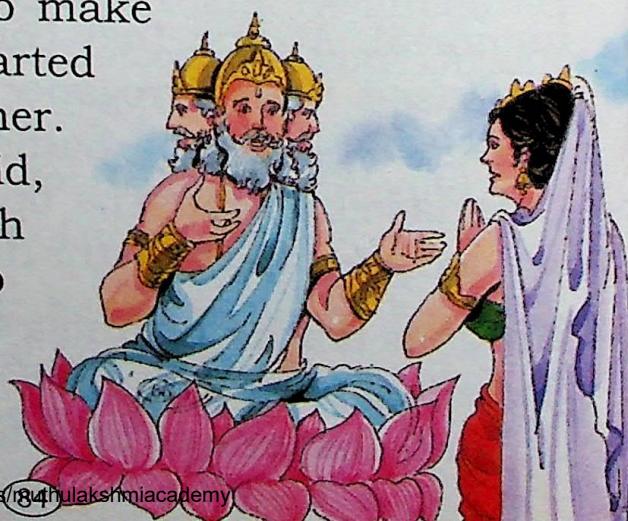
Vishvakarma created an absolute beautiful woman, took her to Brahma and said, “Pitamaha, I have created a charming beauty named Tilottama.”

Brahma being pleased, looked at Tilottama. He directed her, “O beauty! go to the earth right now and make Sunda and Upsunda fight ferociously to get you.”

Tilottama nodded in agreement, and approached the demons immediately. Both the demons fell for her to see her beauty.

Each of them wanted to make her his wife. So both started arguing with each other. Seeing so Tilottama said, “Don’t argue with each other. I have a solution to your problem.”

Both asked together,





"Tell immediately, O beauty!"

Tilottama said, "You both should have a race. Whoever wins will marry me."

Sunda said, "Okay! A good suggestion. See I will win."

Upsunda said, "He talks absurd. I will win and make you my wife."

Suddenly they began to quarrel with each other. Their quarrel resulted in a fierce fighting and finally both of them got killed by each other.

Thus, Sunda and Upsunda had their deaths according to the boon they had received from Lord Brahma.

GOD MAY COME IN ANY FORM

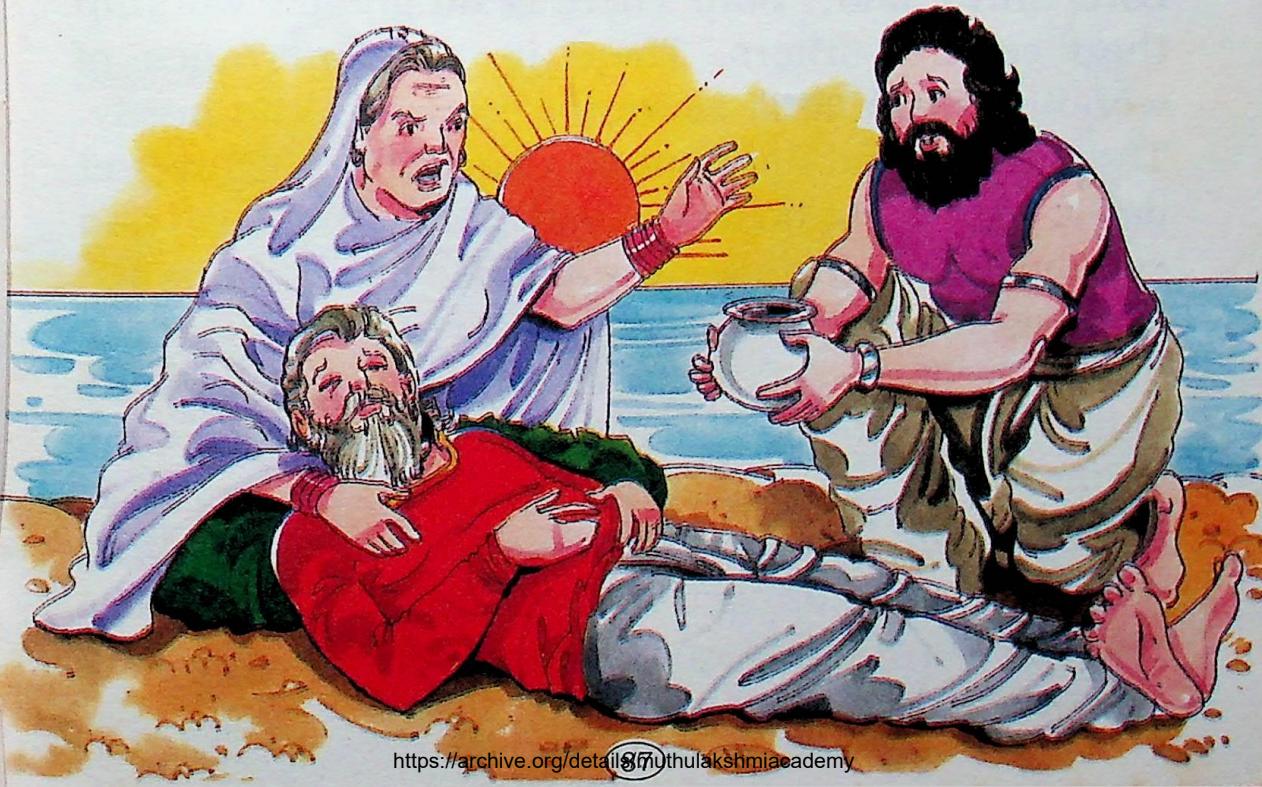
Once an old couple went to take a bath in the holy Ganga at Kashi. Though the couple was unwell yet their deep faith in God and their intense desire to worship God Vishvanatha and a dip into the Ganga had brought them there. Everyone was busy taking a dip in the river and offering *pooja*. No sooner had the old couple come out of the holy Ganga after taking their bath than the old man fell down unconscious. The old woman cried for help but no one noticed her.

One said, "O mother, I have come here to worship God Vishvanath." Another said, "First I will complete my meditation then only I can look at your husband." The old woman was looking anxiously for help. Suddenly she saw a man coming towards her. He was a thief who was running after stealing something from the temple. When he neared her, she

requested him, “Son, we have come here to worship the God. But my husband fell down unconscious before reaching the temple. He was not well yet we could not avoid the charm of holy Kashi. Son, if someone could fetch Ganga water and pour into his mouth, he will be all right. I can’t leave him alone. So, son, take pity on us and earn a little *punya*.”

The thief pitied her. He said, “Mother, wait here, I am just coming with Ganga water. Don’t worry, your husband will get well soon.” Saying so the thief reached the bank of the Ganga. He took a bowl, filled it with Ganga water and reached the old woman.

The thief tried to make the old man drink water but the old woman stopped him saying, “Stop! You can’t make my husband drink water in this way. Give him water by reciting all your good deeds you have done in your life. But mind it, if you lie, my husband will die. So speak the truth only.”



Hearing this the thief sank in thoughts. He had not done anything good throughout his life.

He spoke bowing his head, "Mother! Today for the first time I am doing some good deed by helping you."

Then, he poured the bowl's water into the old man's mouth. As soon as he did so, the old couple

disappeared and there appeared Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. The thief was amazed to see them.

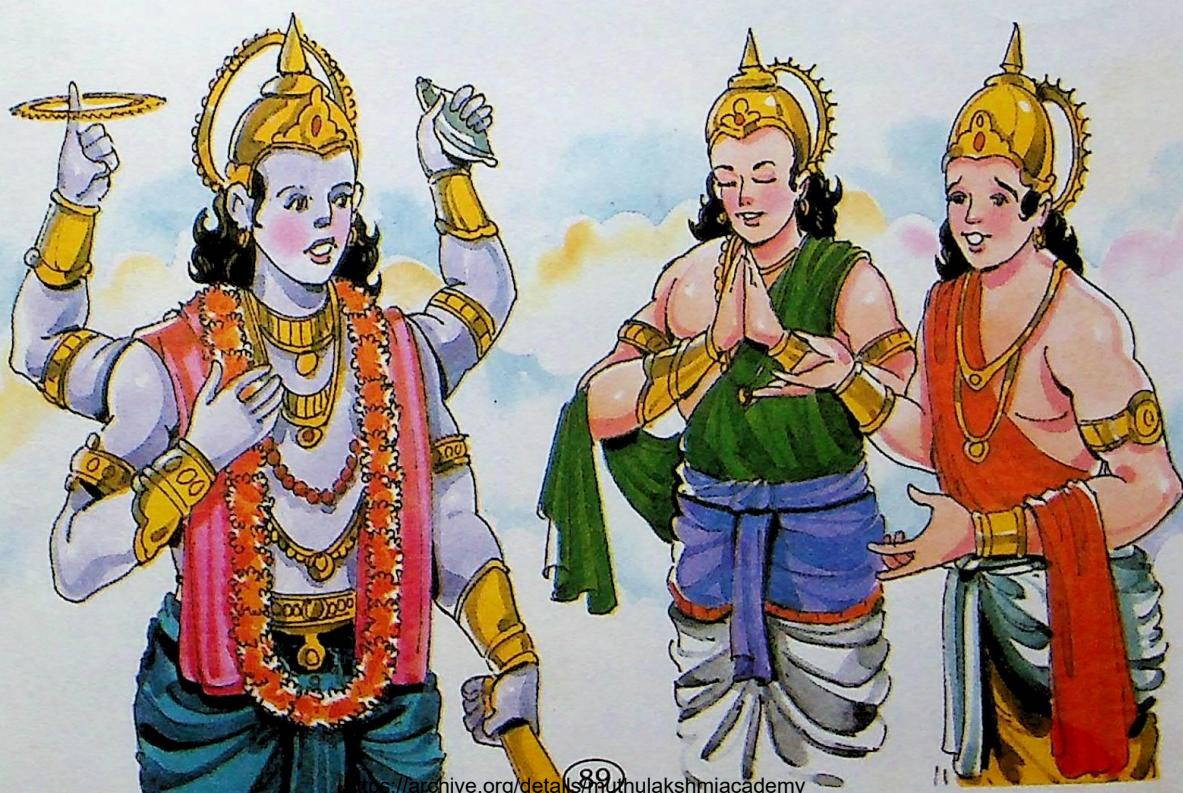
Lord Shiva said, "Son! There is no greater worship than serving others. There is no importance of worship if you can't serve the poor and the needy. Though you had not done any good deed before, yet doing a good deed today like speaking the truth and serving the old couple, have washed off all your sins. Now worship the God and devote your life always to others' welfare. You will become free from all bonds of life." The thief said, "Lord! Just your lively sight is sufficient for me. I desire nothing more? My life is blessed. I will follow the path you've told me." Saying so he fell onto the feet of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva and Parvati blessed him and disappeared.

BRAHMA'S ARROGANCE GOT SHATTERED

Once Brahma became proud of himself. He thought, 'I am the creator. If I stop my job, how will the universe do? I am the omnipotent. All gods are inferior to me. I can do whatever I wish. I can even swallow the fire. Now I will show my power by swallowing all the things. No one can face me. I am Brahma, the creator of the world.'

Thus, Brahma due to arrogance began to consider other gods almost valueless and impotent. He walked forth arrogantly and swallowed whoever came his way. All gods were displeased with his behaviour. They went to Lord Vishnu and prayed to him, "O Lord! Pitamaha's behaviour has changed a lot. Strangely enough he is engulfing everyone coming on his way. Please do something."

Lord Vishnu said, "Do not worry. Soon his pride will



All the gods went back. To break Brahma's arrogance, Vishnu took the form of a child aged 4-5 years. He took a dry wood in his hand and went to Brahma.

Seeing a little child with a wood in hand Brahma said, “O child! Why have you come here? Don't you know I am Brahma, the creator. No one can face me. How dare you stand before me?”

Vishnu in the form of child spoke, “Pitamaha! You are omnipotent. You are the supreme one. But I have a dry wood. I want to see how you burn and swallow it?”

Brahma said, “This is a minor work. It is the work of my left hand.” Saying so Brahma emitted fire from his mouth and tried to burn not only the wood but the child too. But the fire could neither harm the wood nor the child. A protective covering formed around them. Flames of fire could not pierce through protective covering.

Seeing it Brahma shouted angrily, “How is this possible? I am omnipotent. I can burn everything. But this child and wood are out of my power. How? I don't understand anything.”

Brahma's anger brought Vishnu into his actual form. He said to Brahma, “I did all this because you had false pride. In favour of creation it was necessary to break your arrogance. Because of your false arrogance you could not even harm a dry wood.” Hearing this Brahma realised his mistake and all his arrogance got shattered.



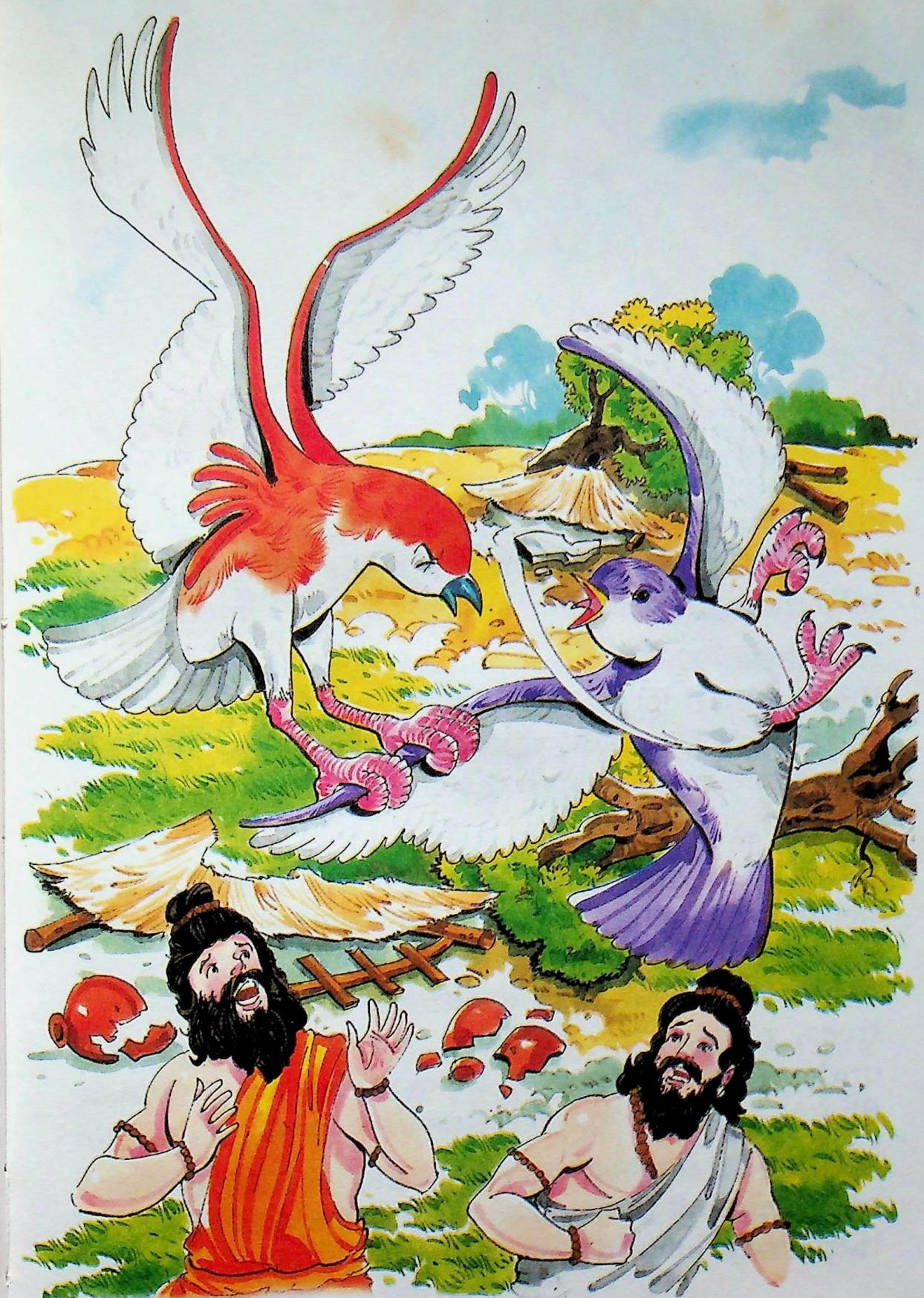
BRAHMAJI SETTLED THE MATTER

Long long ago, Maharshi Vashishtha performed very hard *tapasya* under the water. He wanted to become the most powerful spiritual person in the world. After *tapasya* when he came out of water, he knew that his dear disciple Harishchandra was caught in several troubles and the root of these troubles was Vishvamitra. Vishvamitra had exiled Harishchandra from his state for not fulfilling his promise. Harishchandra had sold his wife and son to fulfill his promise. Vashishtha was very upset from Vishvamitra.

He went to Vishvamitra angrily and said, “Because of you my dear disciple Harishchandra is suffering. For your own glory you expelled Harishchandra out of his palace. You did not do any good and you will have to face consequences. I curse you that you will become a bird immediately.”

Vishvamitra also reacted to Vashishtha’s curse and said, “I, too, curse you that you will also become a bird like me.”

Both the hermits turned into birds and started fighting. While fighting they started harming homes along with trees and plants. Due to the fierce fighting between the two, the whole earth started shaking. When Brahma saw them fighting he intervened to stop their fight. He cut off their wings, so that they could not fly. Both came down on the earth having got their wings cut. They were now unable to fly. Now they attacked each other with their beaks. Their fight was growing fiercer every





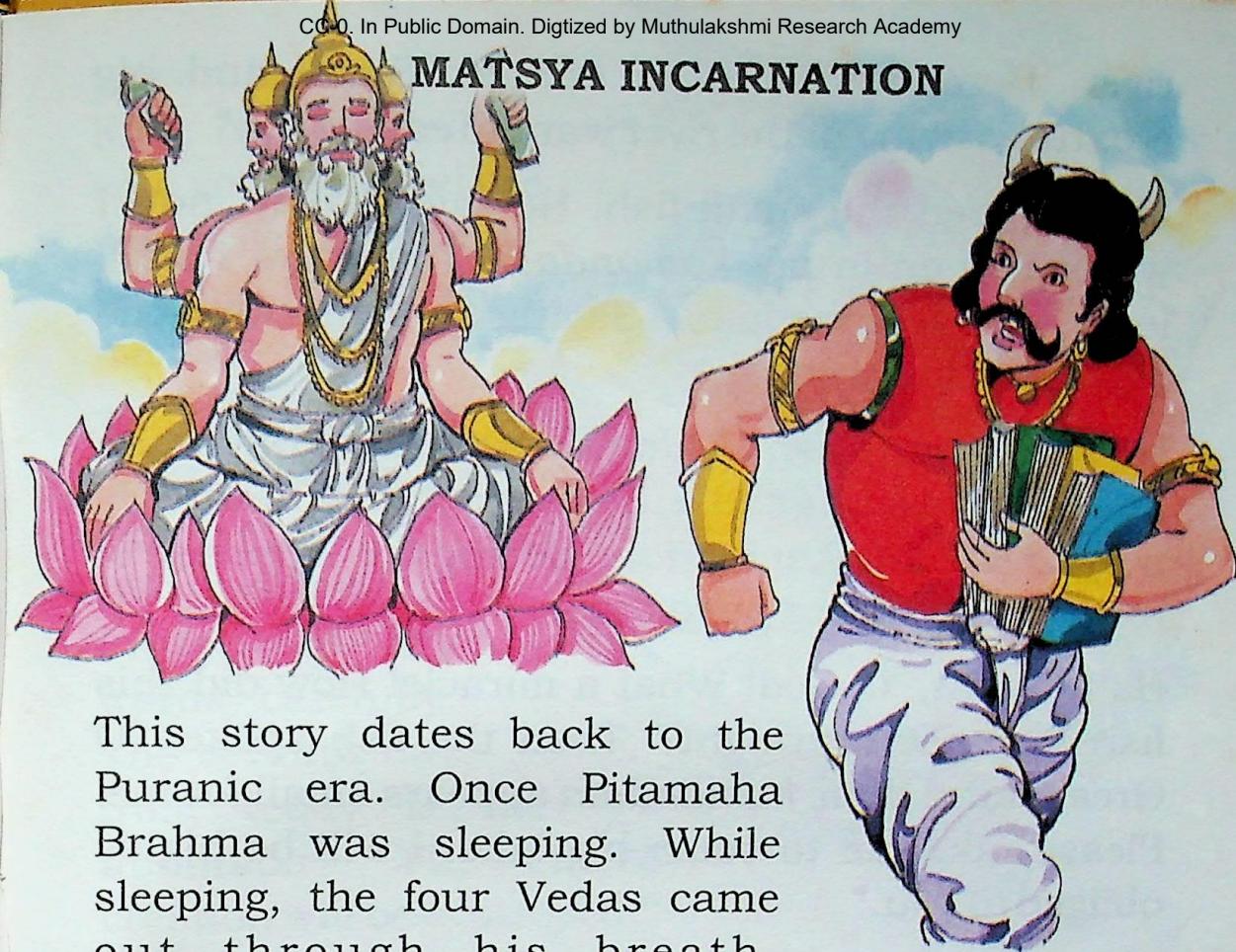
moment. Brahma thought, 'What I did was not enough to stop their fight. Even without wings they are fighting. If their fight continues for long, there will be large destruction. I will have to do something.'

He started thinking of getting both the saints in their human forms. Finally, he decided to perform *tapasya*. As a result of *tapasya* for years Brahma succeeded to bring both the hermits back to human form.

He said to both, "I feel shame to say that you are hermits. You both put the whole earth in danger. First you cursed each other and then started fighting. In your fight a number of living beings, trees, plants and buildings, were harmed, Even ordinary men do not fight the way you were fighting. Shame on you. You call yourself hermits."

Hearing this both the hermits realized their mistakes and they asked for forgiveness. Besides, they also promised not to fight again.

MATSYA INCARNATION



This story dates back to the Puranic era. Once Pitamaha Brahma was sleeping. While sleeping, the four Vedas came out through his breath.

Meanwhile, a demon named Hyagreev was sitting near Lord Brahma. He silently picked up the Vedas and hid himself in the Patal Loka. Due to unavailability of the Vedas, misconduct was spread in the world. Demons started to dominate gods. Brahmins lacked brilliance and religion was disappearing from the world. Immorality and irreligiousness spread all around.

One day Sun's son Satyavrata (Manu) was worshipping Sun in the river Kritamala. He cupped his hands and filled water in the palms. A small fish too came with water in his hands. Manu was about to put the fish back in the water, when the small fish spoke out, "O great saint! Don't put me back in the

river. Here my life is in danger. Small and big creatures living in the river want to eat me up."

Manu pitied the small fish. He said, "Okay, now I will keep you in my *kamandala*. Tomorrow I shall leave you in some lake." Saying so Manu kept the fish in his *kamandala*.

He brought the fish to his *Ashrama*. Next day when he lifted the *kamandala*, he found it very heavy. He peeped into the *kamandala*. Seeing the large size of the fish he was very surprised.

He thought, 'O God! What a miracle! How did this fish increase overnight?' Then the fish spoke, "O Great saint! Your *kamandala* appears small for me. Please take me to some big lake. I will be highly obliged to you."

Manu picked up the *kamandala* and went towards a pond. He left the fish in a big pond. Next day when Manu reached the same pond to worship, he was surprised to see a huge fish swimming over the whole pond. He asked the fish, "Are you the same fish whom I had kept in my *kamandala* for a night and then left in this pond?" The fish said, "Yes, you are right. But now even the pond seems smaller to live in. Please leave me in the sea where I could roam freely."

Manu took the fish in the sea. As soon as he left it in water it started increasing in size. Manu was amazed to see the size of the fish. He had now understood that the fish was not an ordinary one. He thought it to be the master of some unworldly

power. Manu asked, "O King of fish, tell me who you are. I feel the presence of divinity in you. Please tell me the truth."

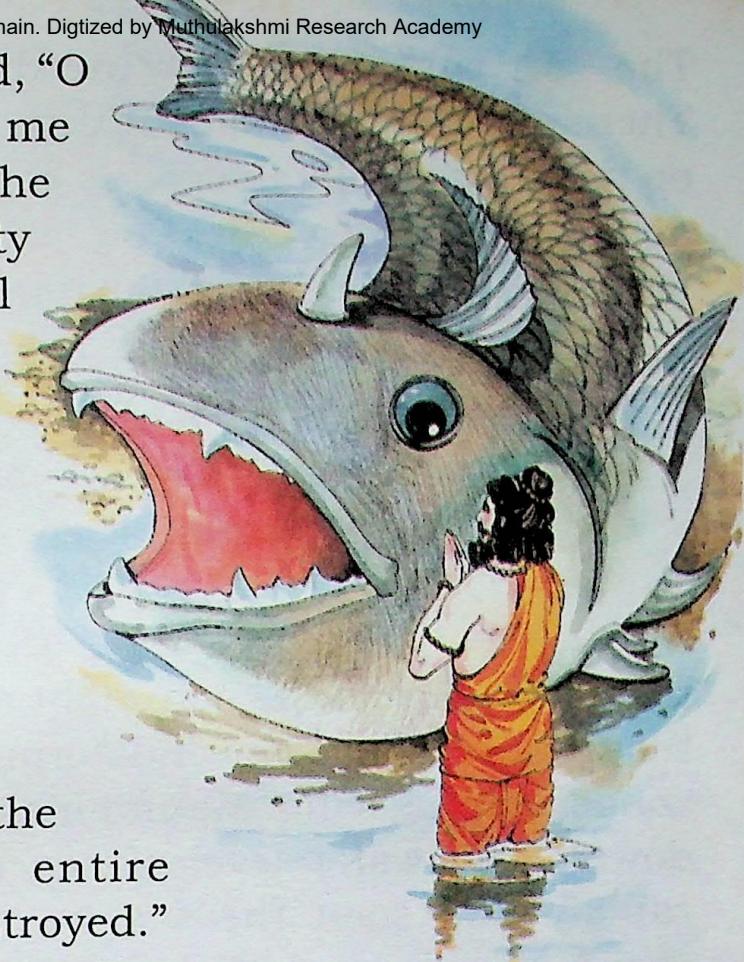
The fish spoke, "I want to tell you an important information.

Listen to my words carefully. The seventh day from today is the doomsday. The entire creation will be destroyed."

Manu was much amazed when he listened so. He spoke, "Quite a peculiar thing you have told! When you know about the doomsday, you must also be knowing some way to avert it. Please tell me how to get saved from the coming destruction."

The fish said, "Doomsday is certain to come. There is one and only way to save yourself. Build a huge boat and take all the living beings, at least one pair of every species, on the boat. Yes, don't forget to take seeds of vegetation with you. Besides, also take the Sapta-rishis with you in your boat. They are capable of developing creation."

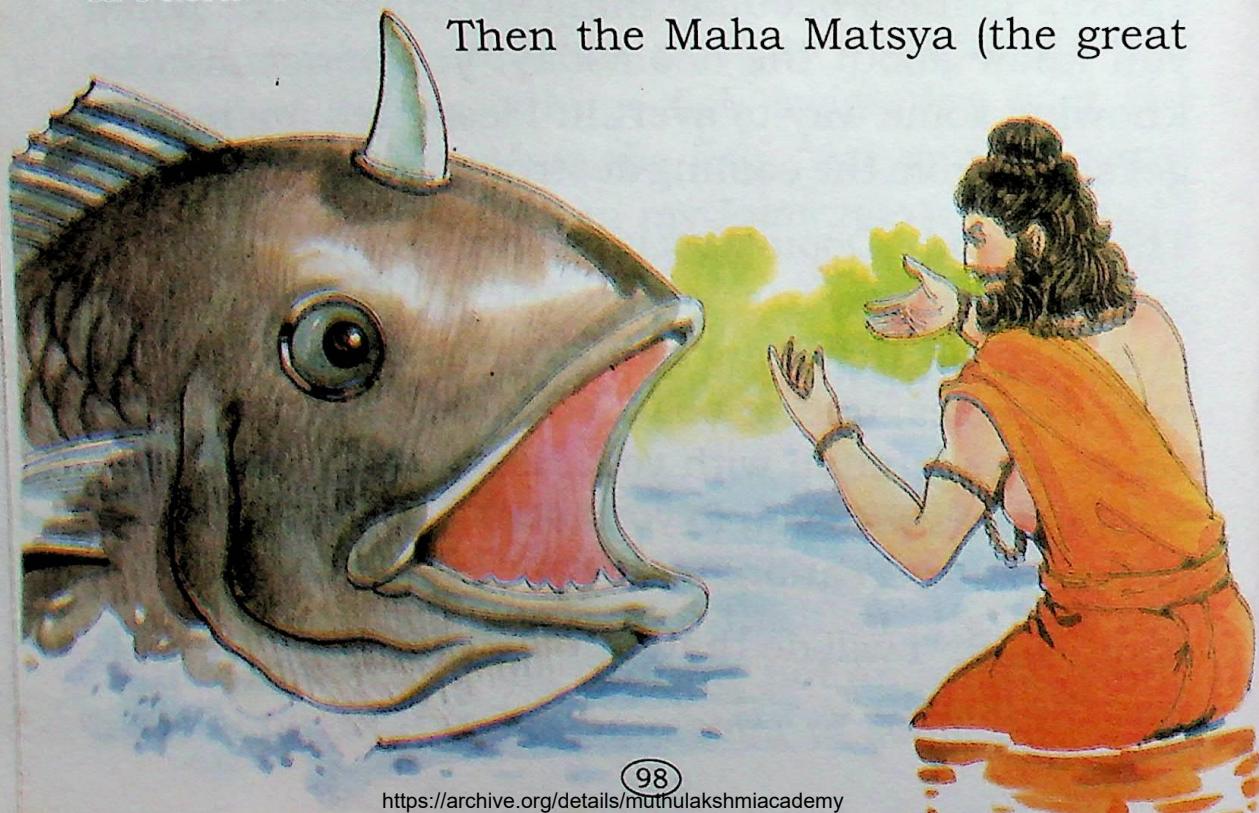
Manu said, "I will do that, but after that where will I lead the boat to?"

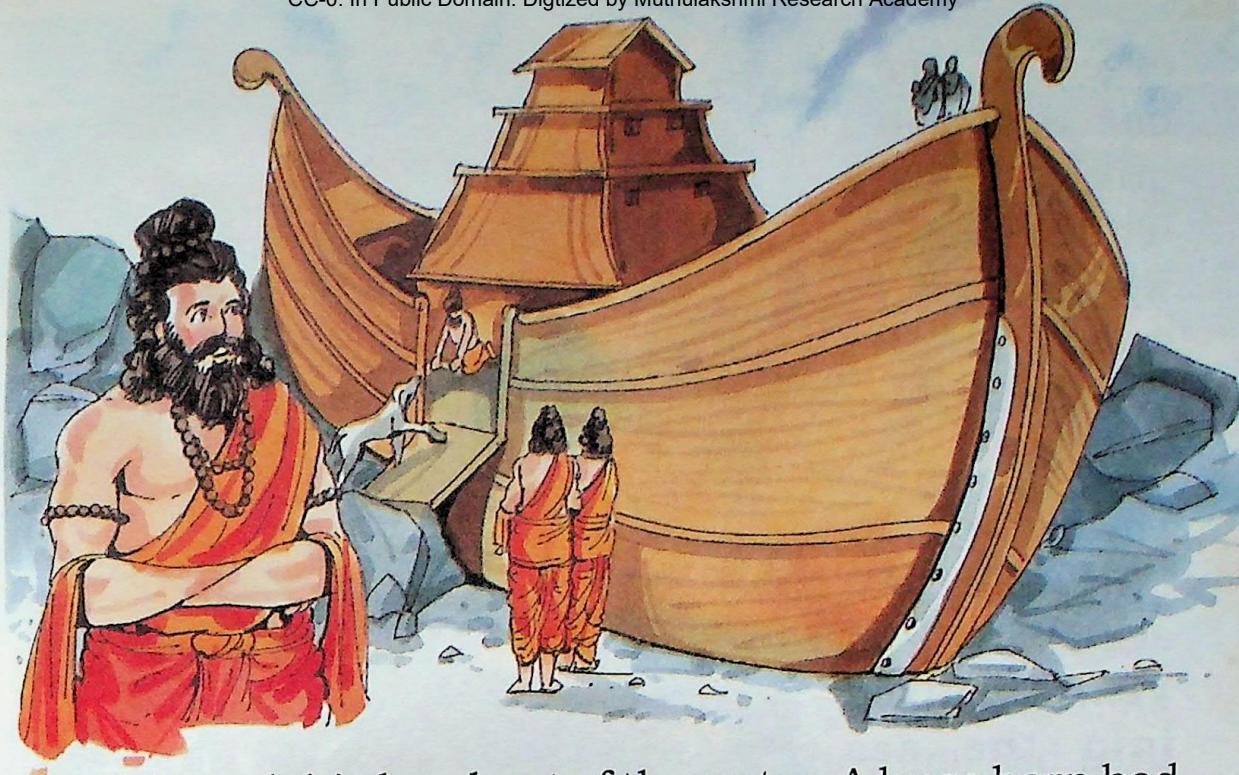


The fish said, "You only need to do this much. Thereafter, fasten the boat with a rope to the horn on my head. I will take you to some safe place. After doomsday, a new creation will take place. And listen, use Vasuki Nag as the rope."

Accordingly, Manu got a huge boat built. Through the power of his *tapasya* and *yoga* he took all living beings' micro bodies in the boat, and took all vegetation's seeds along. He went to Vasuki and requested him to act as a rope. Vasuki agreed. Then Manu with Sapta-rishis sat in the boat. According to the suggestion of the fish, right on the seventh day there started a severe windstorm in the sea. Speedy winds were blowing! Mountains started to crumble down!. The water level of sea started increasing rapidly and soon the sea waves submerged the entire world. A destructive scene appeared all around. Manu's boat started to float on the water.

Then the Maha Matsya (the great





fish) took his head out of the water. A huge horn had grown on his head.

He went in front of Manu's boat and said, "Manu, fasten your boat to my horn."

Without wasting even a second Manu fastened the boat to the horn using Vasuki as rope. The fish moved towards a safe place pulling the boat fast. The fish led the boat to a mountain and said, "Manu, stay on this mountain until everything is normal. There after form a new creation with the help of Sapta-rishis."

Manu with the Sapta-rishis and all other creatures alighted from the boat. All bowed to the fish.

Manu said, "At least now tell me who you are. I am keenly eager to see your real form."

As soon as Manu said so, Lord Vishnu transformed in place of the great fish. He said, "Manu, you were

eager to see me! Now you might have understood why didn't I appear before you earlier."

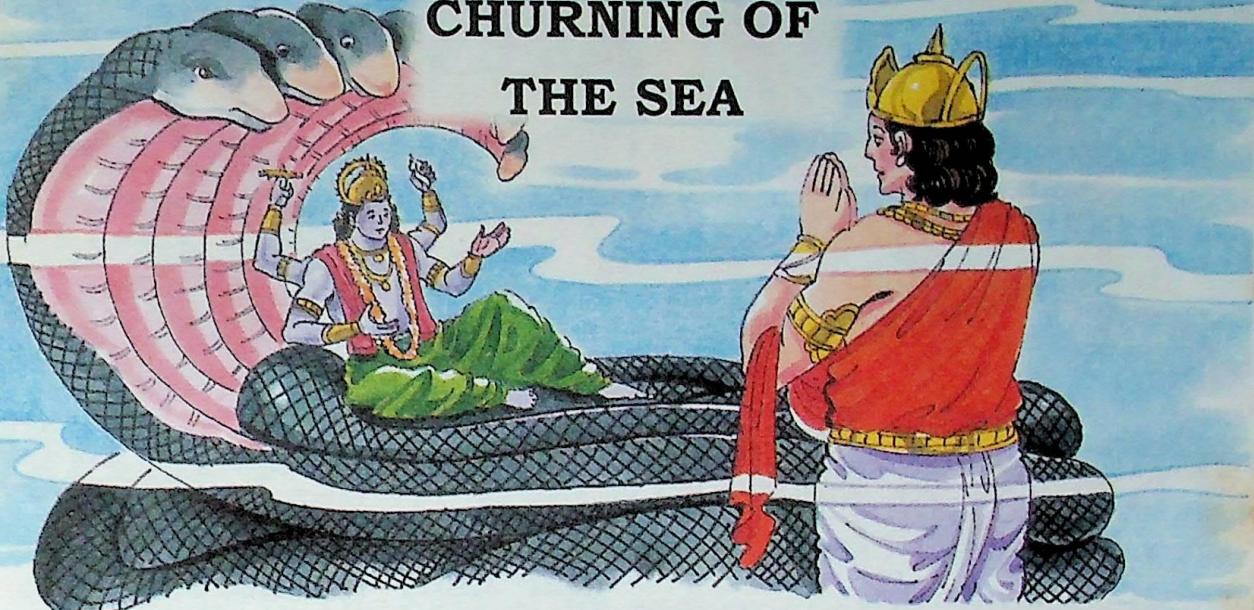
Everyone bowed to Lord Vishnu again, and Lord Vishnu dived into the sea taking the form of the fish. Manu stayed at the same mountain with all the creatures and as soon as the doomsday ended, Manu with the help of Sapta-rishis formed the new creation.



Thus, Manu is the father of the new creation. Hence we all are called *Manav* i.e. the offspring of Manu. Lord Vishnu in his Matsya-avatar went to the Patal Loka, killed Hyagreev, and brought all the four Vedas and handed them to Brahma.

Brahma kept the four Vedas once again in his mouth safely. Due to the effect of the Vedas, peace was established in the new world.

CHURNING OF THE SEA

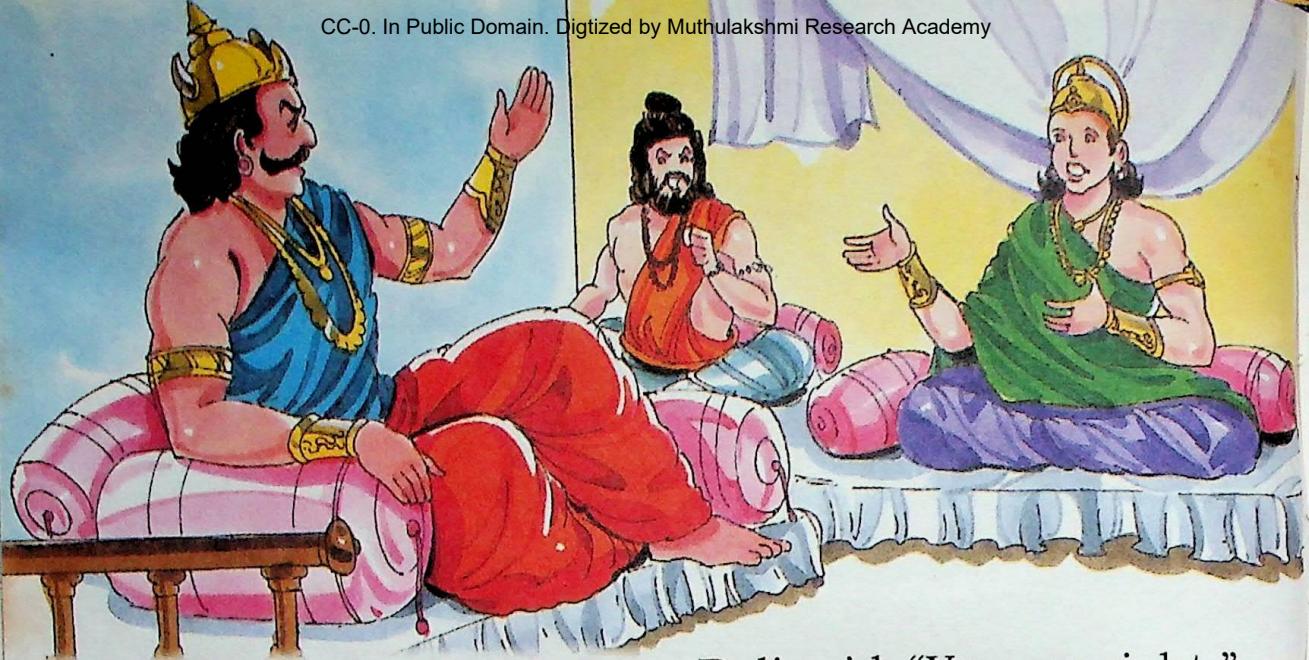


Once the sage Durvasa cursed the gods in anger. As a result the gods lost their glory. They reached Lord Vishnu and said, "We have come to seek refuge. You know that due to the curse of Durvasa we cannot fight against the demons."

Vishnu said, "To regain your lost glory you will have to churn the sea, with the help of the demons. Whatever will be obtained from the churning, keep along with you and you will regain your lost status and glory." Indra said, "Will the demons be ready to churn sea with us?"

Vishnu said, "Go to demons' king Bali and remind him that both, the demons and the gods are the issues of the same creator. He is very emotional. He will surely be ready to help you."

Indra reached Bali and said, "O King of demons! Both the demons and gods are offspring of the same father. Thus, we are brothers. So, let's forget enmity and live like brothers."



Bali said, "You are right."

Then Indra said, "Lord Vishnu says that the demons and the gods should churn the sea together. Gods are ready for this. Are you ready?" Bali said, "Yes, we are." Indra said, "Whatever will be obtained from the sea we will share among ourselves." Bali agreed to Indra.

Both the demons and the gods went to the Vasuki Naag and requested him to act as a rope in the churning of the sea. Vasuki accepted their request. Thereafter, they went to the Mandarachal mountain. They lifted it and left for sea. They could only take the mountain to a small distance only. They found themselves unable to bear the weight of the Mandarachal mountain. Indra hurriedly went to Lord Vishnu and after telling him everything requested for help.

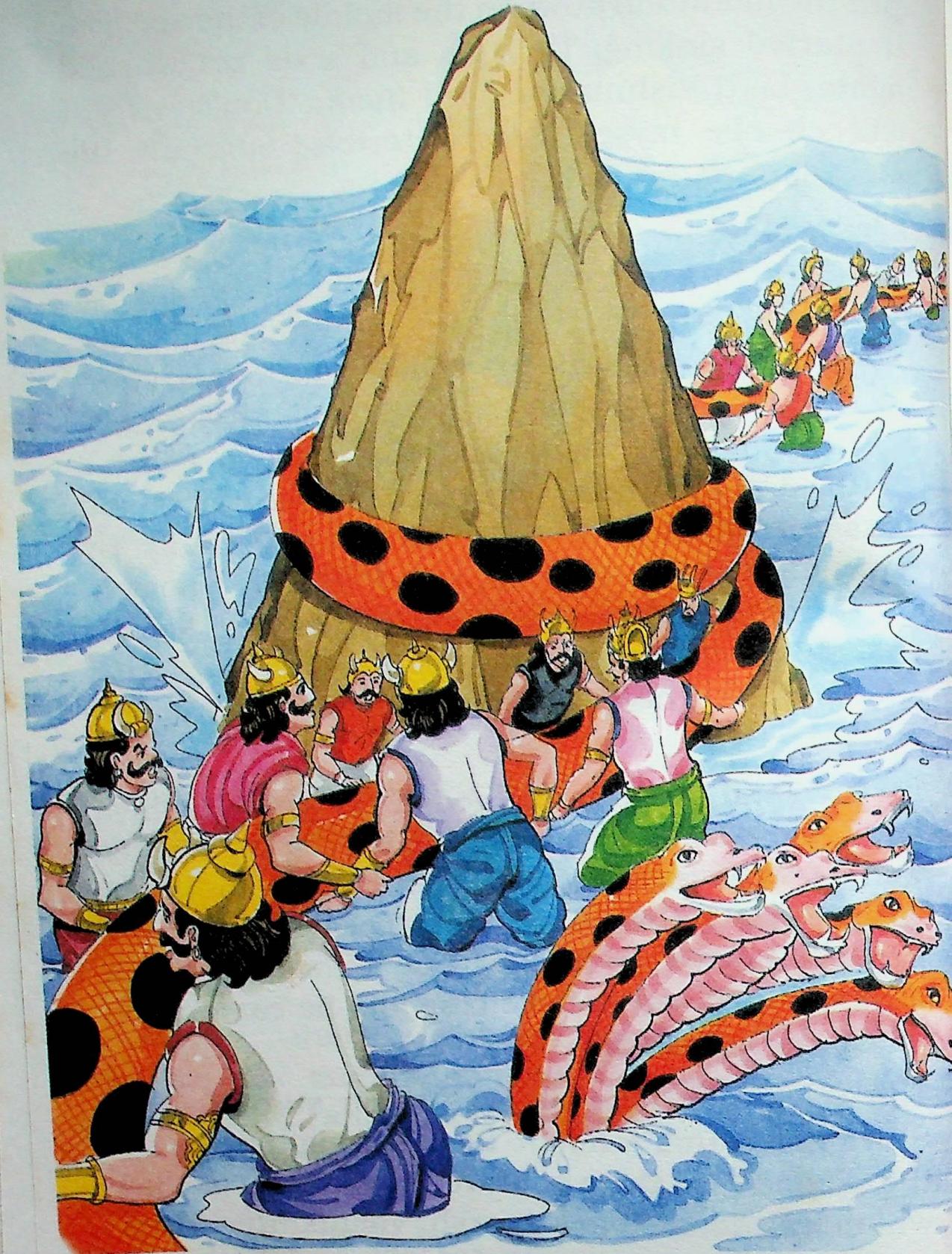
Vishnu said, "Don't worry. I just take the mountain to the middle of the sea." Lord Vishnu lifted the Mandarachal mountain and carried it to the sea. He

put the mountain down in the middle of the sea. But it started sinking. Demons and gods got worried again. Lord Vishnu consoled them, “Don’t worry. I will change myself into a tortoise and lift the mountain on my back.”

Lord Vishnu took the form of gaunt tortoise and held Mandarachal on his back. Now the gods and the demons started churning the sea. Demons held the mouth end of Vasuki and gods held its tail. Demons and gods started pulling Vasuki from both the ends. Vasuki started hissing and the demons became troubled by the heat of his venom. On the other hand gods were pulling the tail of Vasuki comfortably. By churning the sea first appeared ‘*Halahal*’ poison. Due to its effect the sea also started burning. Neither the gods nor the demons were ready to accept *Halahal*. Now the question was ‘who would accept *Halahal*?’

Lord Vishnu spoke to the gods, “Go to Lord Shiva and request him to accept *Halahal* for the world’s welfare.” The gods requested Lord Shiva to accept *Halahal* for the world’s welfare. Lord Shiva drank ‘*Halahal*’ but did not swallow. Due to the effect of the *Halahal* his throat became blue and he came to be known as ‘Neelkantha’.

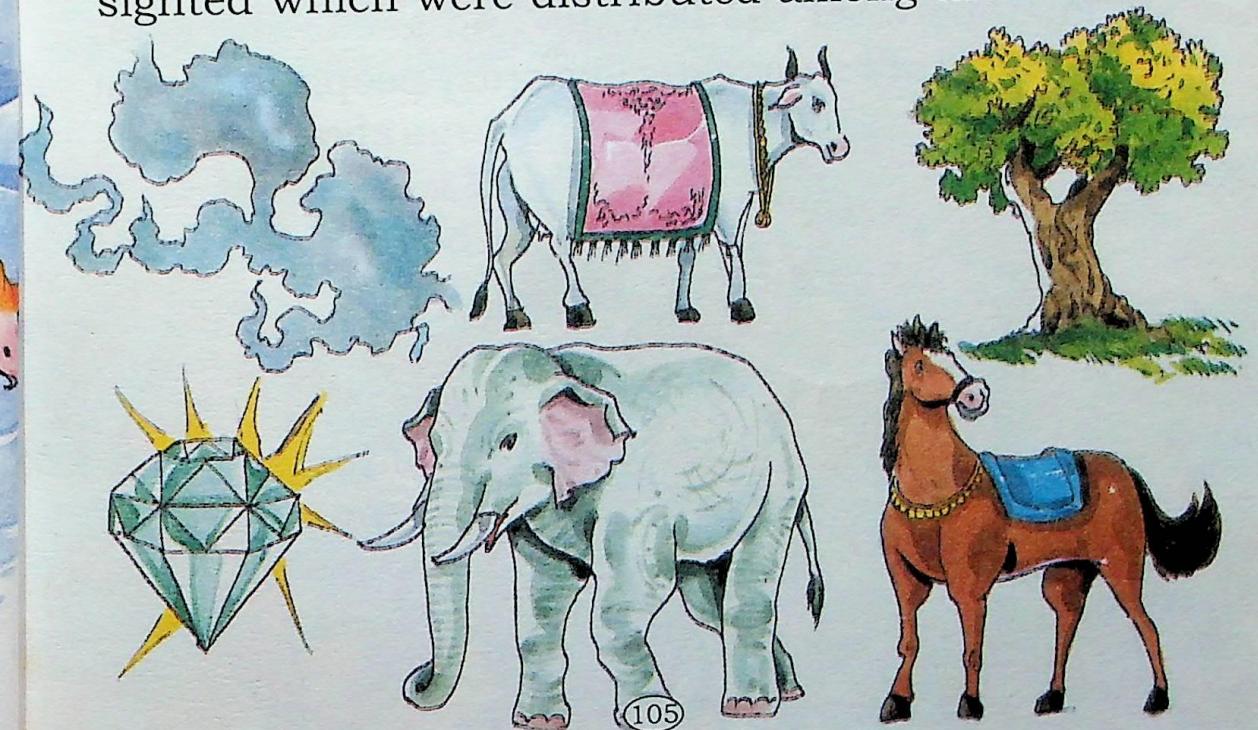
The act of churning sea was again started after Shiva had drunk *Halahal*. By churning the sea for the second time there appeared *Kamdhenu* (a cow) which was donated to Maharshi Vashishtha. Then appeared a horse named *Uchchashrava* which was taken by the demons’ king Bali. Fourth, an



elephant called *Aeravat* showed up which was taken by Indra. Then appeared *Kaustubh Mani* which was taken by Lord Vishnu. A tree named *Parijaat* was sighted next, which was planted on the seashore. A beautiful lady named *Rambha* came next. She was taken neither by gods nor by demons. *Rambha* accepted to live on the earth and in the heaven as per her desire. Then Goddess Lakshmi showed up. After seeing her, both the gods and demons argued to get her.

Lord Vishnu said, "You both had promised not to quarrel with each other. Don't fight between yourselves. Let this decision be taken by herself. Let us ask her with whom she will stay!"

Lakshmi selected Lord Vishnu and, thus, she became God Vishnu's wife. Then a wine in the form of a woman followed, which was accepted gladly by the demons. In the same manner many things were sighted which were distributed among the demons

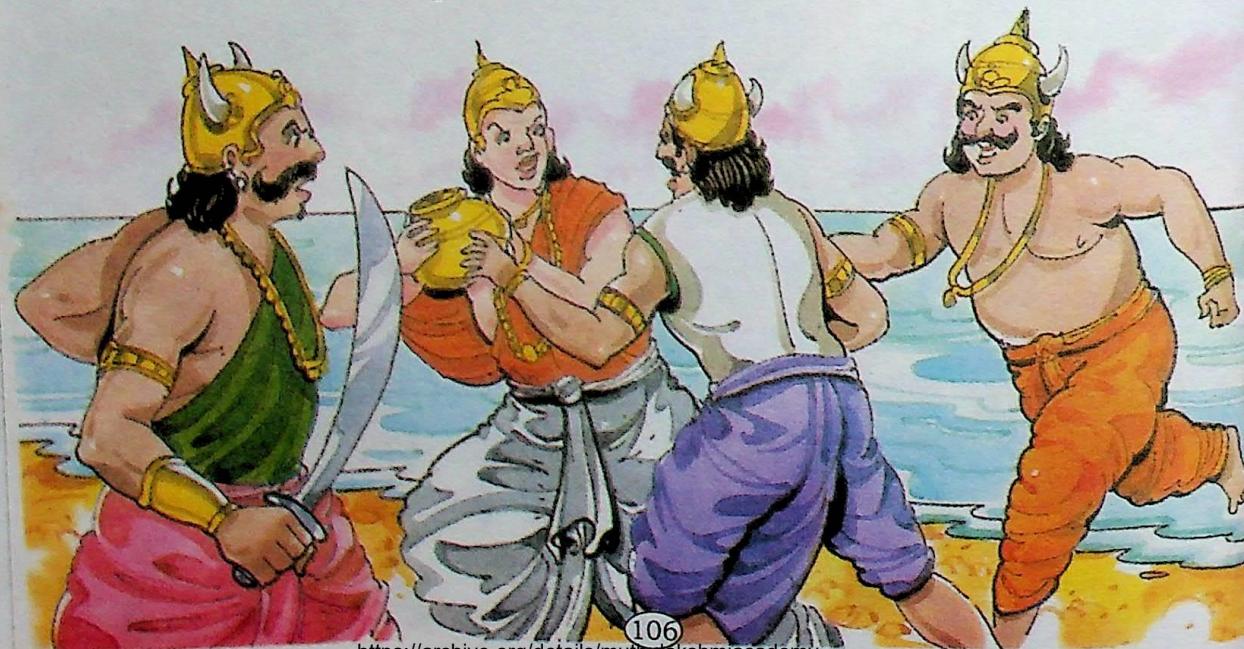


and the gods. Finally there appeared the Vaidya Dhanvantari holding the nectar pot in his hand. Demons and gods both were happy to see the nectar-pot as they were eagerly waiting for it. The demons spoke, "First we will drink the nectar."

The gods spoke, "No, we will drink the nectar first." Meanwhile a demon snatched the nectar pot from the hand of Dhanvantari and ran away. Indra chased him and said, "Give me this pot. We also have laboured the same as you all have. You can't drink it alone."

Seeing the situation getting worse Vishnu whispered to Indra, "Don't quarrel with demons this time. Lest they should throw the nectarpot on the ground. Keep patience. I will find some way."

Lord Vishnu transformed into a beautiful woman named Mohini. Demons and gods both were charmed to see the fascinating beauty of Mohini standing between the demons and gods. She said, "Oh! You all are quarreling like crazy people for just a

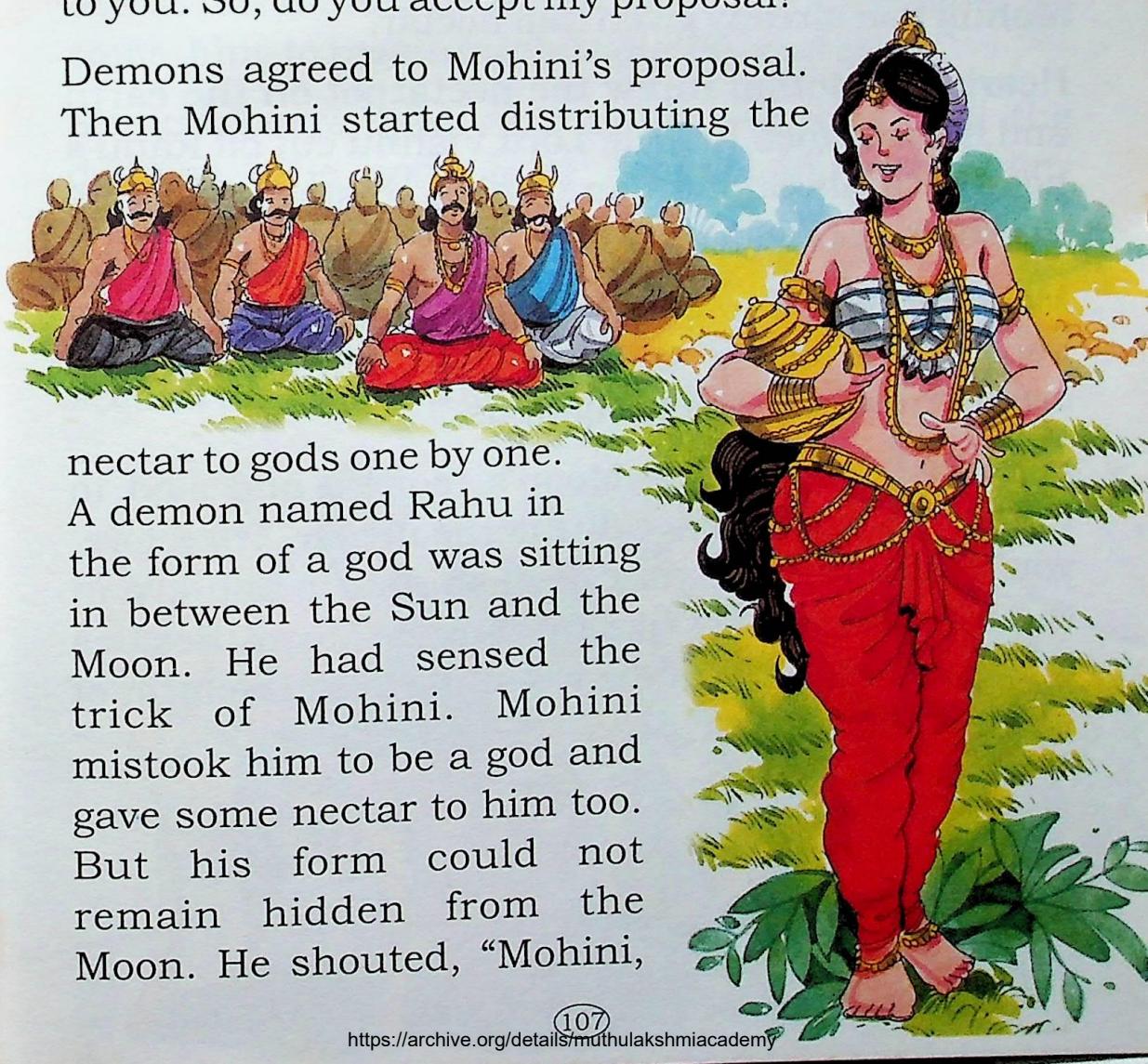


little nectar. Give the pot to me. I will distribute it in turns.”

Gods and demons both were so much charmed by her beauty that they accepted the proposal and made her their mediator. Then Mohini said, “Make a queue. I will give you the nectar one by one.”

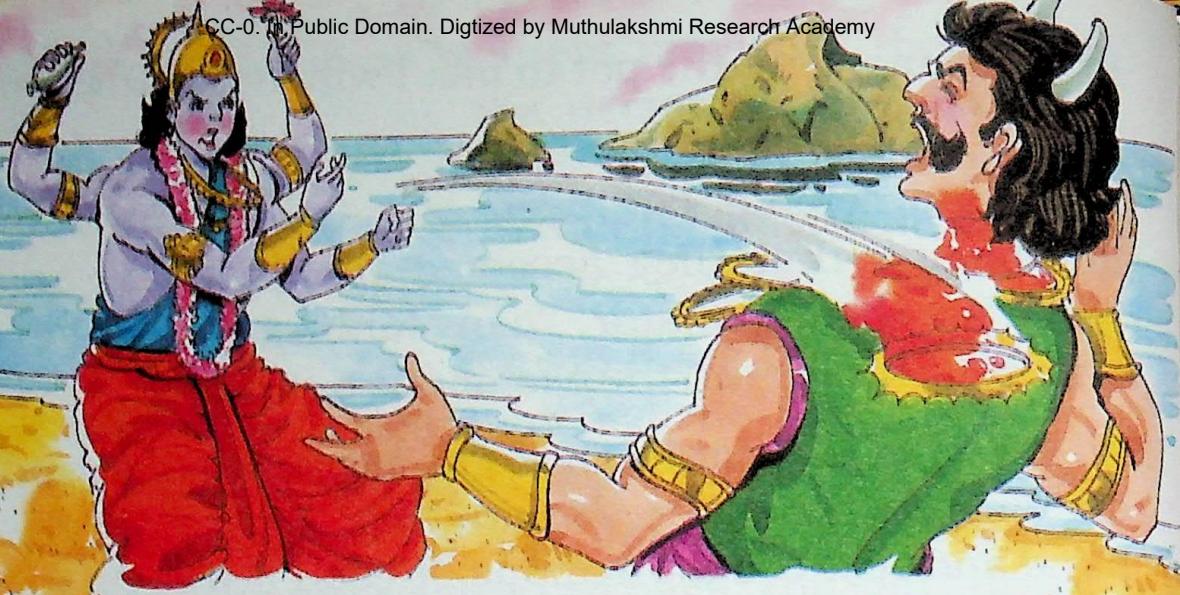
All sat aligned accordingly. Gods sat on one side and demons on the other. Mohini kept the pot in her hand and spoke to the demons, “Nectar is thin on the top and thick at the bottom of the pot. I will give the thin portion to the Gods first then the thick portion to you. So, do you accept my proposal?”

Demons agreed to Mohini’s proposal. Then Mohini started distributing the



nectar to gods one by one.

A demon named Rahu in the form of a god was sitting in between the Sun and the Moon. He had sensed the trick of Mohini. Mohini mistook him to be a god and gave some nectar to him too. But his form could not remain hidden from the Moon. He shouted, “Mohini,



this is a demon in the form of god. Don't get trapped in his Maya." But it was too late. Mohini had already given him nectar.

Hearing it Mohini threw the nectarpot on the earth and transformed herself. Lord Vishnu cut off Rahu's head with his Sudarshan Chakra. Instead of dying, his body was divided into two parts.

Moon requested to Lord Vishnu, "Lord, don't cut his body any more, or else each part will grow into a cruel demon and will torment us."

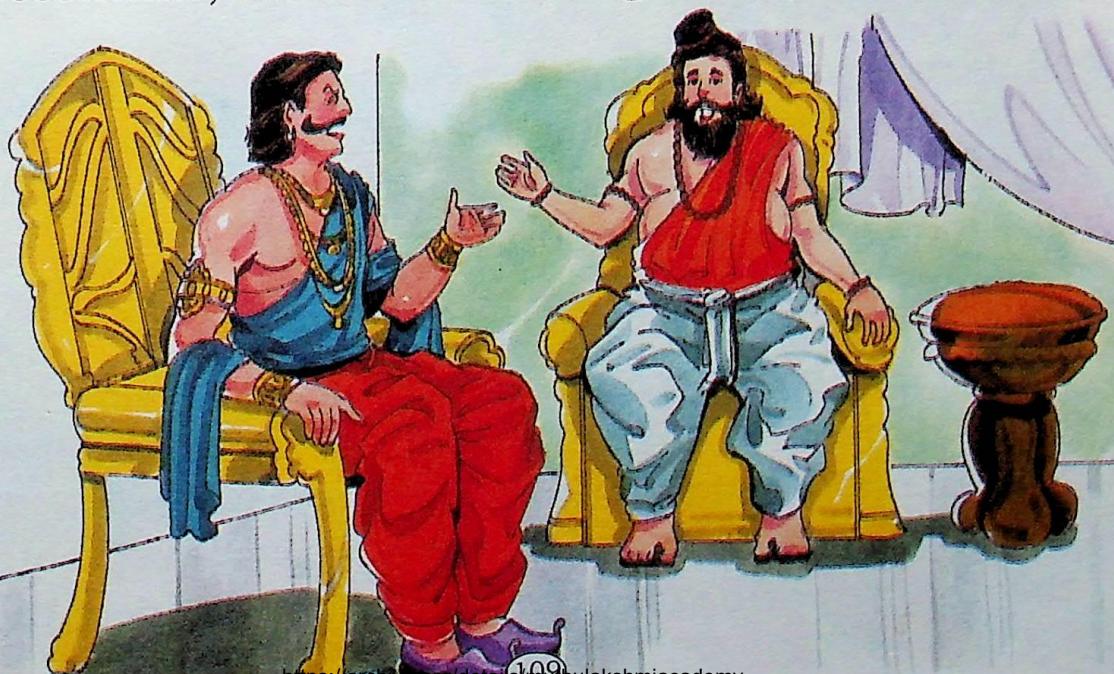
Lord Vishnu accepted Moon's request and said to Rahu, "Rahu, you have drunk the nectar. Therefore, you'll have to leave your devilish nature and live in the form of a planet like the Sun or Moon. Besides seven planet, you will be worshipped in the form of ninth planet."

VAAMAN INCARNATION

Lord Vishnu in the form of Mohini distributed the nectar obtained from the churning of the sea, among the gods. He had deceived the demons. Due to effect of the nectar the gods became immortal. Now a war broke out between the gods and the demons. In this war gods were victorious and the demons' king Bali had to flee to the Patal Loka. Reaching the Patal Loka Bali lived sadly. He could not forget his defeat. His army also had lost confidence. Once he said to his Guru Shukracharya, "Gurudev, I am very upset. Our defeat has diminished the morale of the demons. Do something to regain our lost dignity and glory."

Shukracharya said, "I am also worried about the demons. The gods have become immortal after drinking the nectar. Indra had killed you also. I revived you through the *Sanjeevan Vidya*."

Bali said, "Gurudev, by your grace I have got a second life, but how should I regain my prestige."





Shukracharya said, "O King! Don't be desperate. Soon you will regain your glory. For this you will have to perform '*Vishvajita yajna*."

Bali completed the *yajna* under the guidance of Shukracharya. At the end of *yajna* there evolved a golden chariot, four horses having the speed of wind, one lion-flag, a quiver always full of arrows, a bow, and a divine armour from the *yajna* altar.

Shukracharya gave him all these things and said, "O King!, these things obtained from *yajna* are matchless. If you use these things in the battlefield, the gods will be conquered. They cannot defeat you."

Bali said, "Gurudev, now I will defeat gods badly."

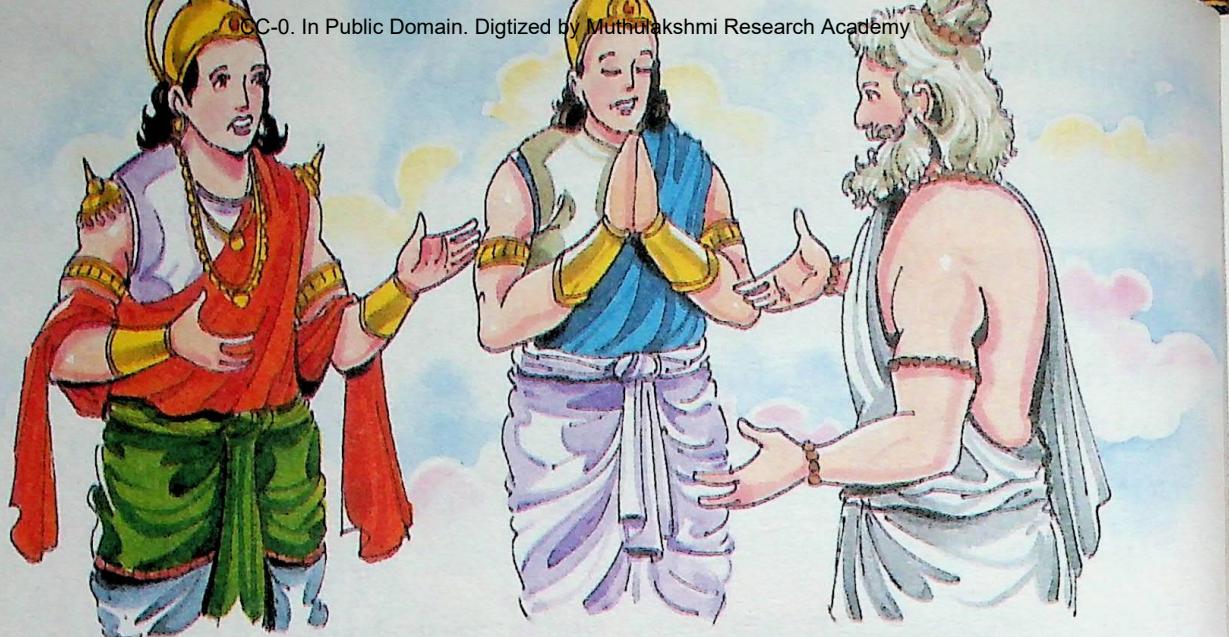
"I still have something to give to you. First take this garland given by your grandfather Prahlada whose flowers never wither. The second thing is this conch whose sound will shake enemies' hearts. Keep both the things with you." Shukracharya handed the

garland and the conch over to Bali.

Bali's power had increased manifold by the things obtained from 'Vishvajita Yajna.' He ordered his army to prepare for a war. He fastened the horses in the golden chariot and set the lion-flag above the chariot. He held the bow in his hand and tied the quiver on his back. Wearing garland around his neck, he blew the conch aloud. Thereafter, he took the blessings of Shukracharya and left for the war.

Bali reached Amaravati with his huge army. He surrounded Amaravati and fought so ferociously that the gods were trembling with fear. Indra himself was leading the god's army. He reached the battlefield on his elephant. Bali shot such a hail of arrows that Indra's weapons proved worthless. Then Bali brought earthquake in Amaravati by blowing his





conch. Indra himself fled away from the battlefield for saving his life. As a result, the army of gods also fled away from the battlefield. Bali ascended to the throne of Amaravati. Then Bali sent the message of the victory to Shukracharya. Shukracharya immediately reached Amaravati for the coronation of Bali. On the other hand, gods took shelter in caves. Being grieved, Indra went to his Guru Brihaspati and said, "Guruji, even after obtaining immortality, gods were defeated badly by the demons. I don't understand how demons had become so powerful suddenly!"

Brihaspati said, "This all happened due to Shukracharya who motivated them to perform Vishvajita Yajna that made them so powerful."

Indra said, "Gurudev, it means that there is no way to defeat the demons. Will we be wandering here and there forever?"

Guru Brihaspati said, "You should worship Lord Vishnu. He will liberate you from this trouble."

On the other hand Bali wanted to rule Amaravati forever. He said to Shukracharya, "Guruji, I want to be a permanent king of Amaravati. How is it possible?"

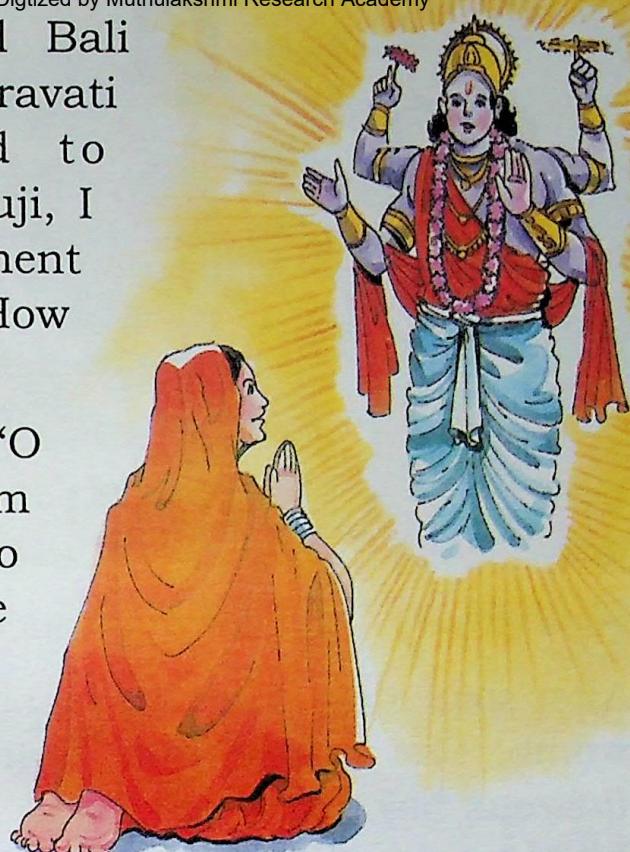
Shukracharya said, "O King, till you perform *yajna*, donate to brahmins and the poor, no one can dethrone you."

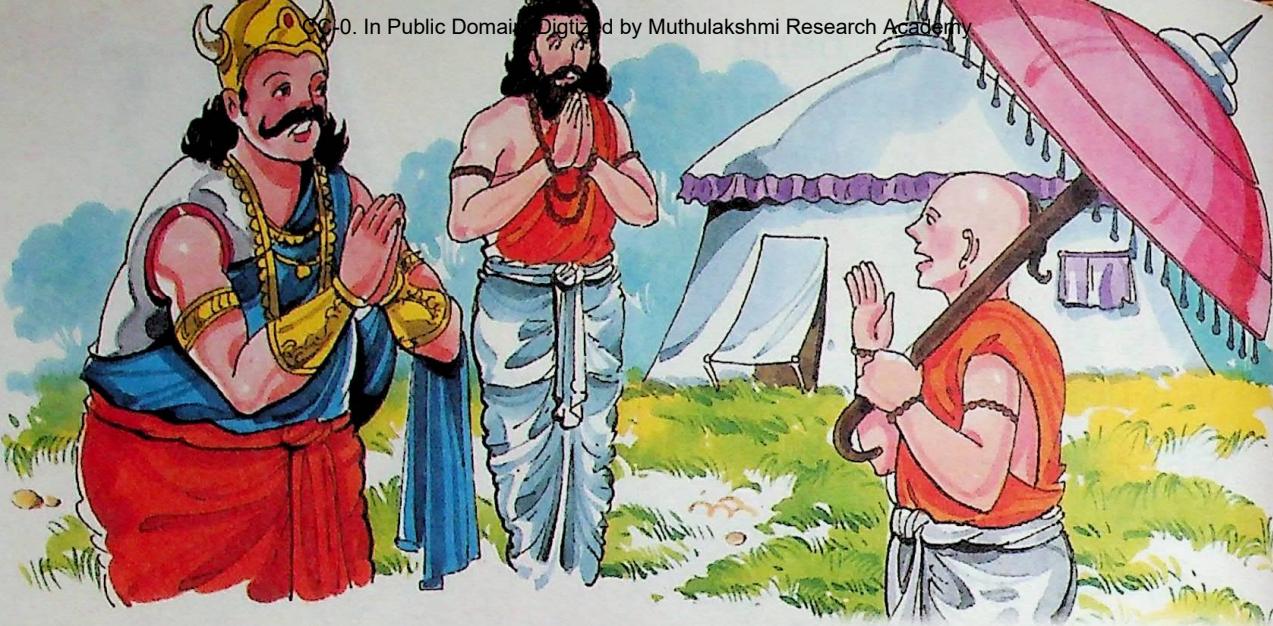
Now Bali devoted himself in performing *yajna* and other duties told by Shukracharya. He gave donations to brahmins and the poor. This way he became very popular and dear to his people. No person would return empty-handed from his court.

Aditi, Indra's mother and Maharshi Kashyap's wife started worshipping Lord Vishnu. Being pleased with the worship of Aditi, Lord Vishnu appeared before her and said, "O gods' mother! I am pleased with you. Tell me what do you wish."

Aditi said, "Lord, you already know that my sons are wandering around. I am very sad due to their pitiable condition. Please restore Indra's kingdom."

Lord Vishnu said, "Mother, your wish will be fulfilled soon. I'll take birth from your womb and remove





gods misery. Just keep patience.”

After some time, Lord Vishnu took birth from Aditi's womb. She named him Vaaman. Vaaman was a lustrous boy since childhood. As Vaaman grew up his fame spread far and wide. One day when Bali was performing *yajna* at Bhrigu Kachchh, Vaaman reached there. Seeing a brahmin coming Bali stood up in his honour and said, “You're most welcome! What can I do for you?”

Vaaman said, “O King! You are famous far and wide. I have come to ask something from you and hope that you will not disappoint me.”

Bali said, “Express your desire. I will try to fulfill your wish even at the cost of my life.”

Vaaman said, “I need only three steps of land.”

Bali said, “All right. Measure the land you require.” Listening to Vaaman's strange wish, other demons started laughing at him. Vaaman listened to everyone but spoke nothing. He just smiled and

started increasing his size. Now his size was really huge. Everyone was very amazed to see his large size. A demon spoke, "He seems to be an illusionist." Other said, "Yes! Indeed he is. You are right."

Vaaman with his enormous size measured the whole earth in first step and the whole heaven in the second one. All were amazed to see it.

Shukracharya warned Bali, "Demons' king, be cautious. This Vaaman in brahmin's guise is none other than Vishnu. He had measured the earth in first step and heaven in the second one, but now don't allow him to take the third step. Otherwise you will have to lose everything."

Bali said, "Guru, now I have given him word. I can't go back on my word even if I lose everything."

Lord Vishnu in Vaaman's form called Garuda and ordered to tie Bali up. Garuda tied Bali in his bonds. As soon as Bali was bound Vaaman asked him, "Say demons' king! Where should I put my third step? In first step you donated earth, and heaven in second. Now what do you give me in the third step?"

Bali fell on the feet of Vaaman and said, "God, I present myself before you. Have grace on me and put your third step on me."

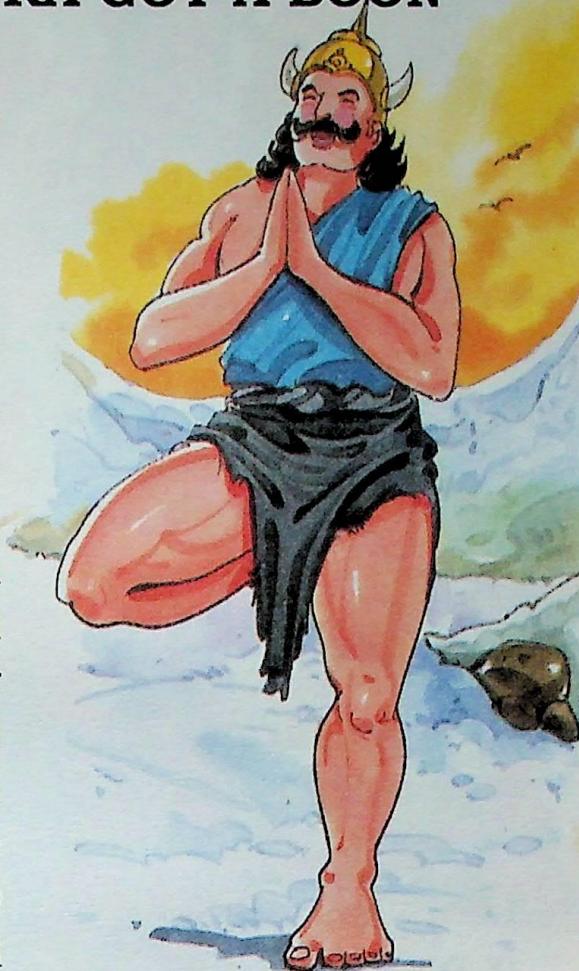
Being pleased with the charity of Bali, Lord Vishnu sent Bali to Patal Loka and crowned him as its king.

Thus, by the grace of Lord Vishnu, Indra ragained his lost kingdom and glory.



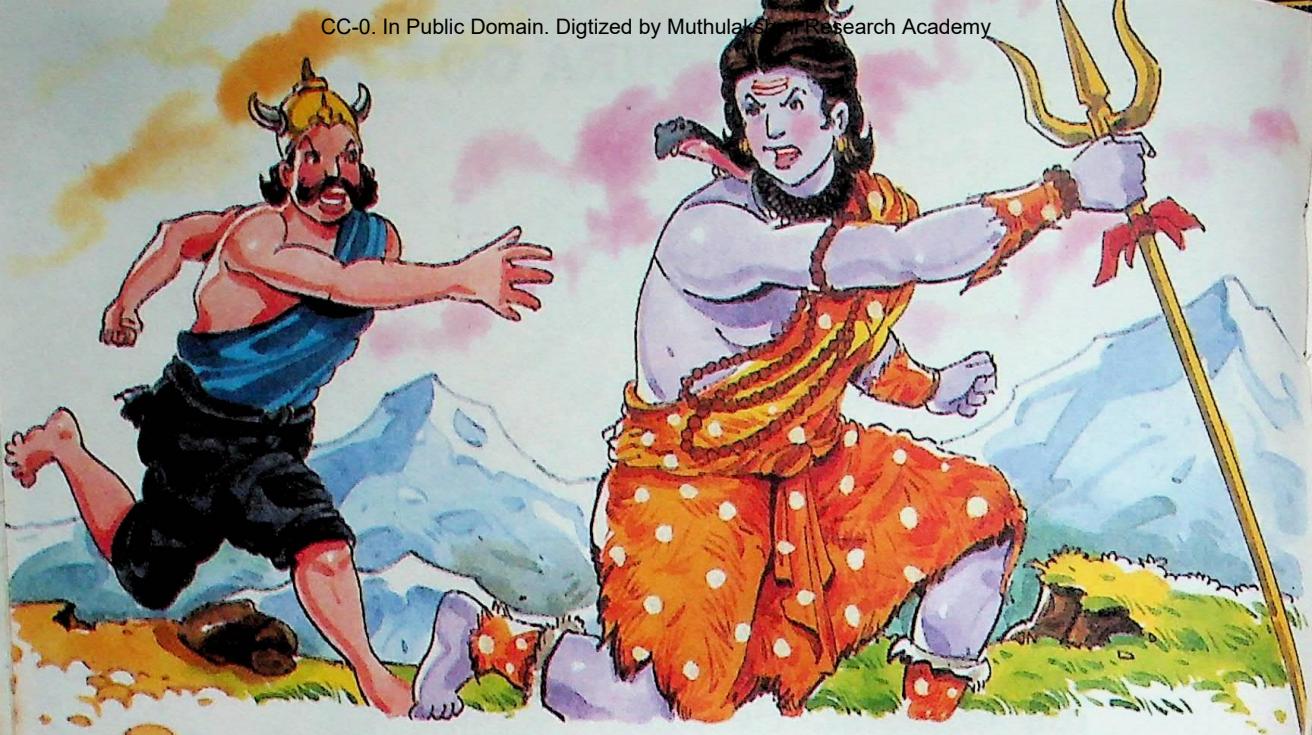
WHEN BHASMASURA GOT A BOON

There was a demon named Bhasmasura. To become unconquerable and immortal, he decided to perform *tapasya* to please Lord Shiva. He went to the Himalayas and started meditating severely. Windstorm, rain, storm, etc. could not deviate him from his *tapasya*. He did not care even for hunger and thirst. Finally, Lord Shiva was pleased with him. He appeared before him and said, "O Bhasmasura, I am pleased with your *tapasya*. Ask for whatever you desire."



Bhasmasura was amazed to see the marvellous form of Shiva. He was moved by Lord Shiva's personality. Trying to be normal he spoke to Lord Shiva, "Lord, bless me to have such a power that if I put my hand on a person's head, he should turn into ashes."

Lord said "Amen!." Then Bhasmasura said, "You have given me the boon, but I want to test its power on you only to be sure whether it truly works." Saying so, Bhasmasura tried to put his hand on Lord Shiva's head. Lord Shiva got scared and ran away holding his trishool. To save himself Lord Shiva ran



over the mountains, rivers, forests, and fields but Bhasmasura still chased him. Seeing the omnipotent running to save his life, birds made noises and animals stamped their feet.

Lord Vishnu was watching them. He thought, 'Shiva is really innocent and simple. He got pleased with Bhasmasura and gave him the boon according to his wish. And now due to boon he has fallen in danger. I should help him.'

Thinking so, Lord Vishnu assumed the form of Mohini, came before Bhasmasura and said, "O demons' king, where are you going so hastily? You might be tired. My father's ashrama is nearby, come and take rest for a while."

Bhasmasura being charmed by her beauty said, "O beauty, I am running after Shiva. I want to test the power of the boon given by him to me. I want to put my right hand on his head to see the effect of the boon."

Mohini said, "You are running after that ascetic and wasting your time for nothing. Come with me to my father's ashrama, have some snacks and then search him."

Bhasmasura came into sweet words of Mohini. He said, "O beauty! You are so beautiful. I want to make you my wife. Will you marry me?"

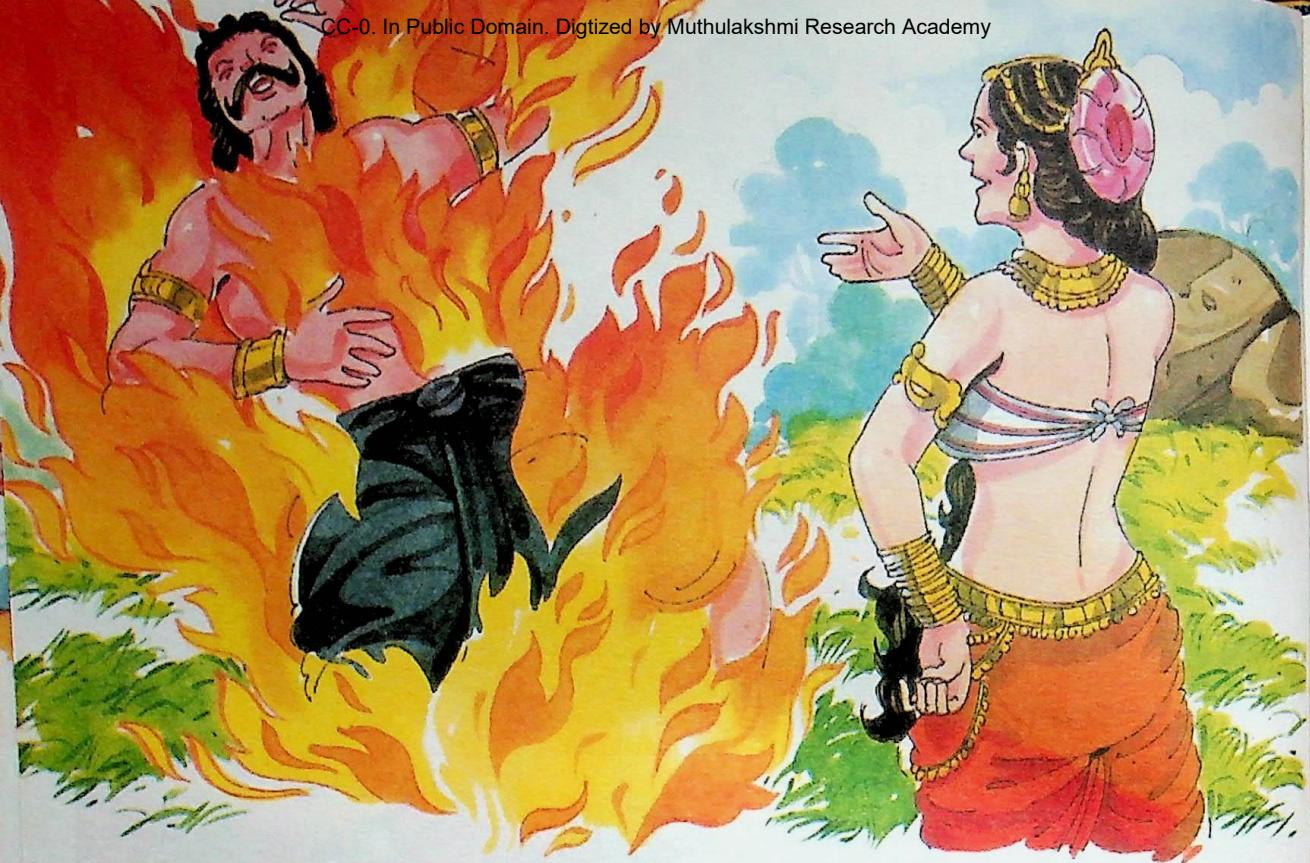
Mohini spoke laughing, "I can't believe your words. I will marry only that person who will not marry anyone else. But you demons have several marriages. So I can't marry you."

Bhasmasura was impatient to get Mohini. He said, "Mohini, I promise that once getting married to you, I will never marry anyone else."

Mohini said, "You can lie also. First put your hand on your head and swear that you will never marry anyone other than me."

Mohini's beauty had badly infatuated Bhasmasura. As he put his right hand over his head to swear, he





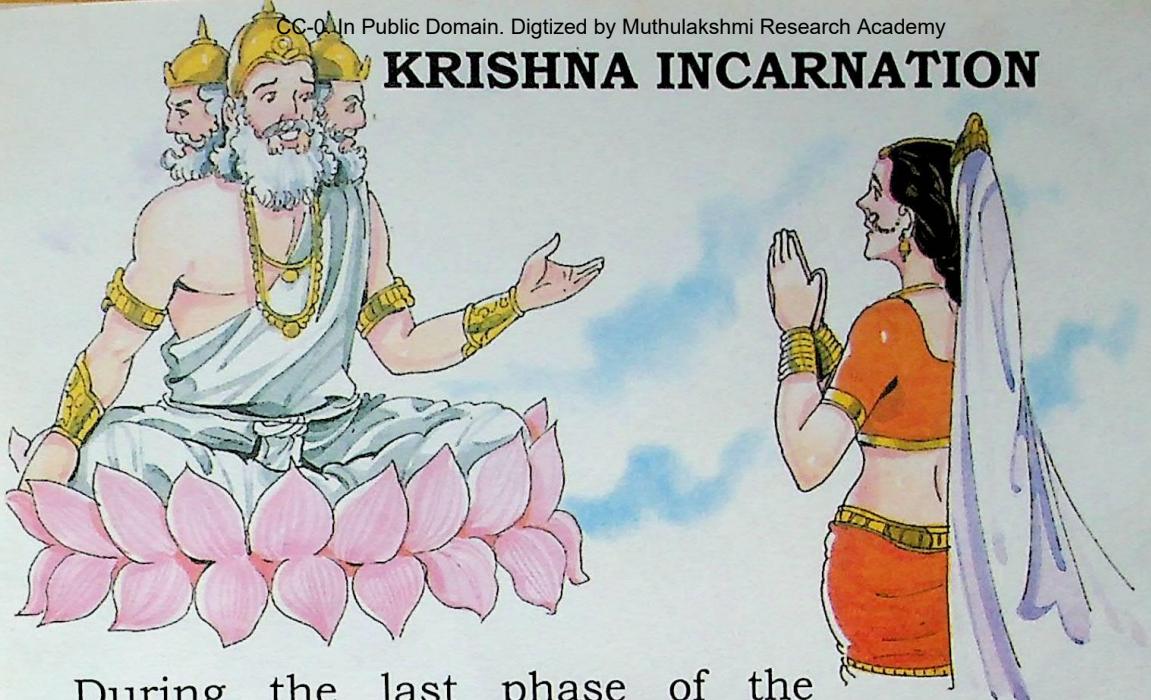
turned into ashes.

On the other hand, when Lord Shiva saw Bhasmasura's ash, he spoke to Mohini, "Beauty! Many many thanks to you. This wicked demon was mad after me. How did you end him, I am curious to know."

Mohini smiled and told him how she did it. She said, "Lord, I did all this to get your grace." Saying so Mohini bowed to him folding both hands.

Getting pleased, Lord Shiva wished to embrace Mohini, but Mohini slipped from his hands. But soon he understood everything when he saw Lord Vishnu at Mohini's place.

KRISHNA INCARNATION



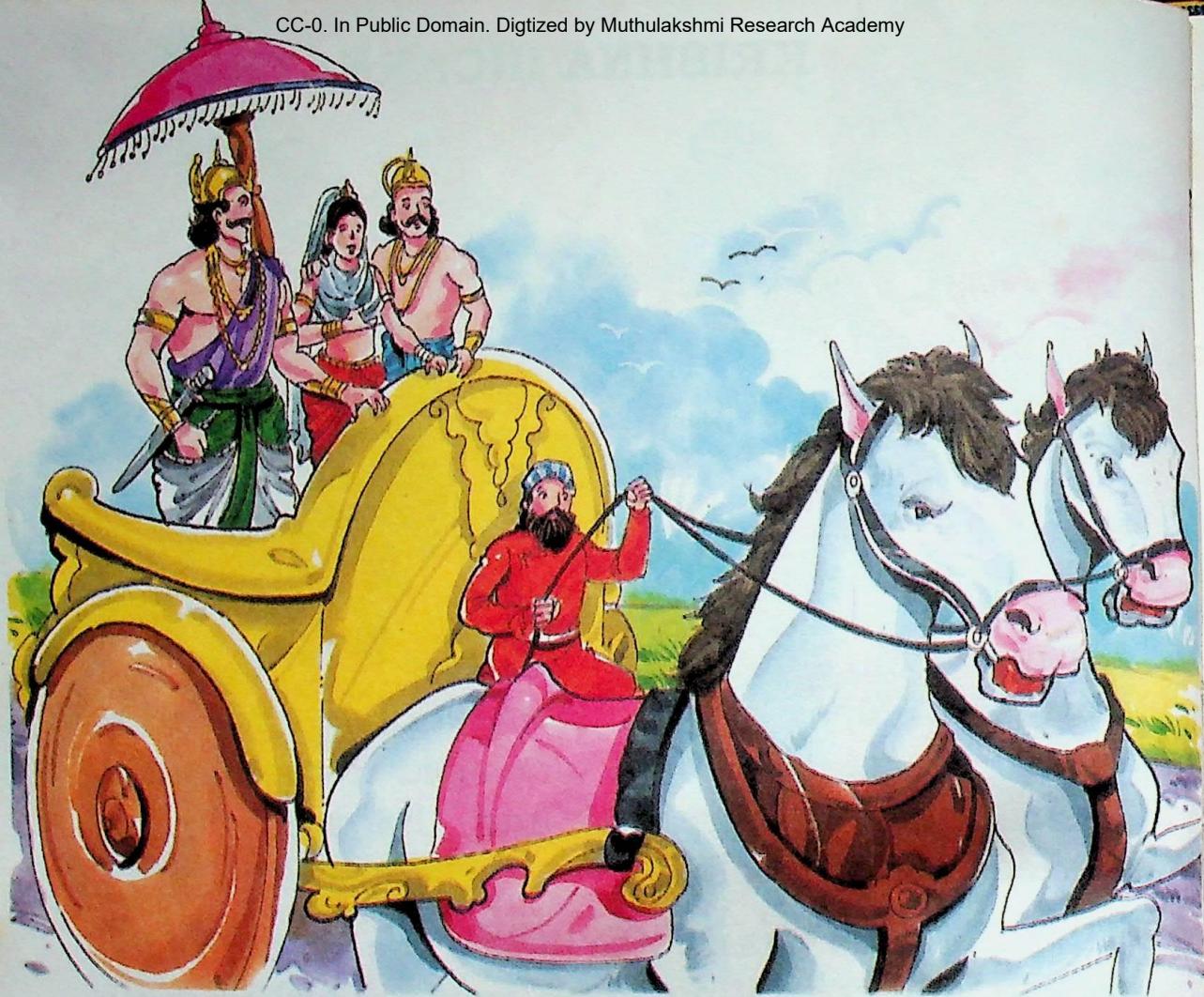
During the last phase of the Dwapara Yuga, Kansa, Jarasandha and other wicked kings' power had increased tremendously. Their cruelties increased and the whole earth started crying for help.

When the earth was unable to bear the burden of the wicked, and cruel kings, she went to Lord Brahma and said, "Lord! Now it's intolerable for me to bear the cruelties of Kansa, Jarasandha and others. Hermits, ascetics innocent people all are in trouble. Religion has disappeared from my surface. Now I can't bear the burden of their sins any more."

Brahma said, consoling the earth, "Keep patience. I will tell about this to the Lord Vishnu. He will certainly find out a solution to your grievance."

Thereafter, Brahma went to Lord Vishnu and told him everything.

Lord Vishnu said, "Pitamaha, don't worry. I will soon take birth on the earth in human form and put



an end to her sorrows."

Kansa was the king of Mathura. He was married to Jarasandha's two daughters Asti and Prapti. Jarasandha and Kansa both thought themselves to be the most powerful and often put their people to trouble. They would destroy hermitage and bothered the sages. Kansa demolished the temples and prohibited *pooja, yajna*, etc. He dethroned his father Ugrasena to become the king himself.

Kansa was very affectionate to his cousin Devaki. He would fulfil her every wish. To him nothing was higher than her wish. He married Devaki to Vasudeva with great pomp and show. He himself went to see

them off in their chariot. On the way a celestial voice echoed, "O Kansa! The eighth son of your sister, whom you love so much, will kill you. Your death is predestined by Devaki's eighth son."

Kansa was taken aback. He just then dismounted Devaki from the chariot and said, "When you shall not survive, then there is no question of your having a son? I'll just now do away with you."

Saying so he held her hair and was about to hit



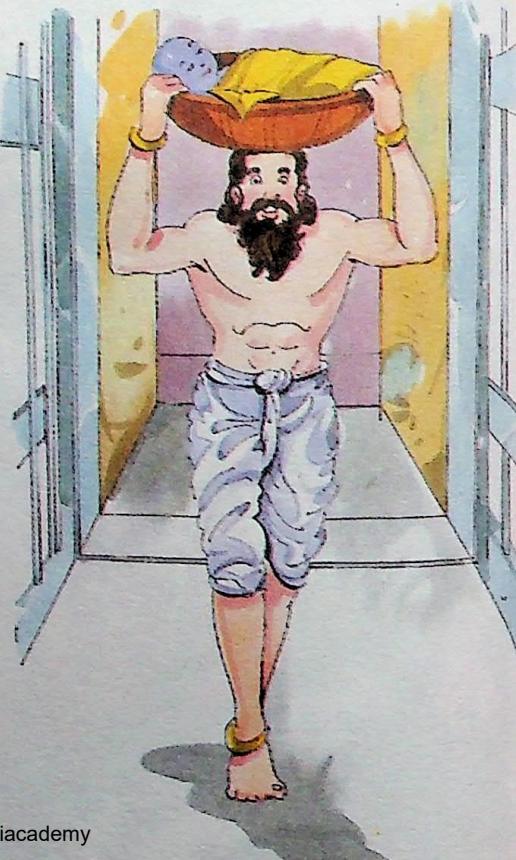
Devaki with his sword, Vasudeva fell on Kansa's feet and begging for her life, spoke "Maharaja, Please leave her. I promise you that I will give every child of Devaki to you."

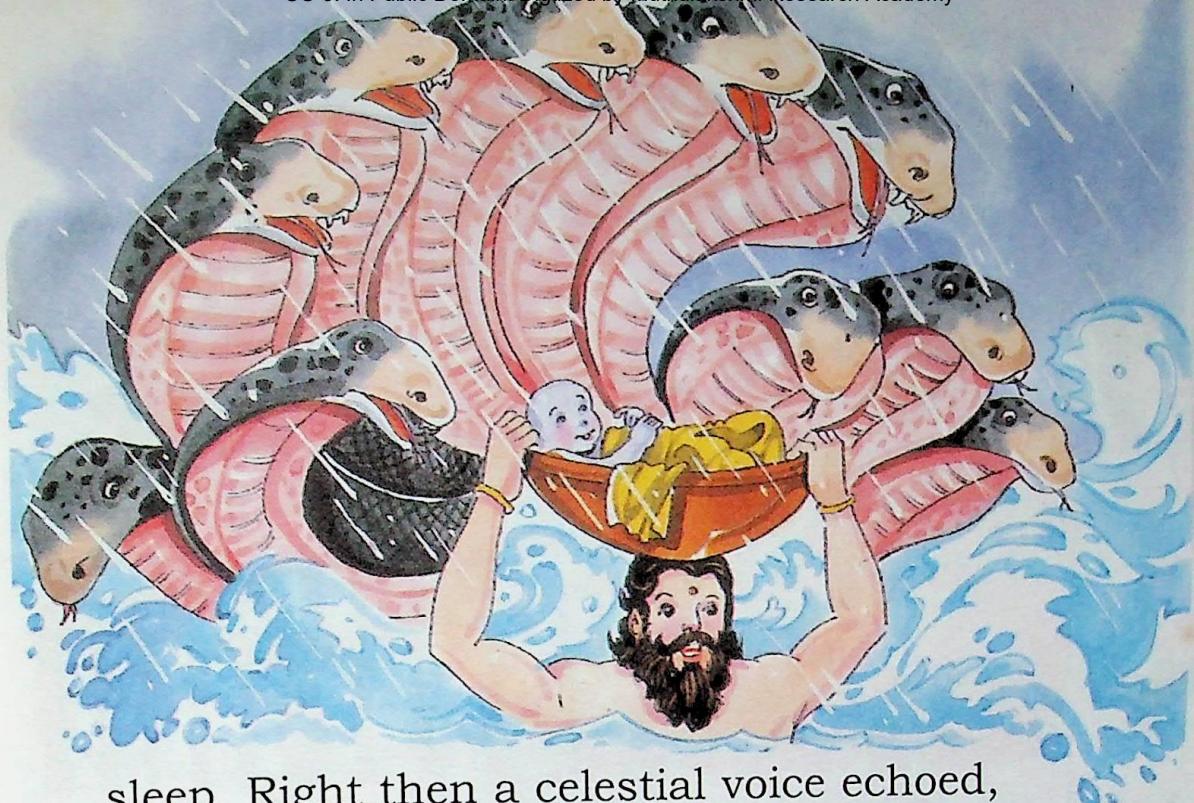
Kansa agreed and put Devaki and Vashudeva behind bars and set a strict watch on them.

Devaki gave birth to six sons one by one and Kansa killed everyone of them. Vasudeva and Devaki had to bear the agony of their sons's death. When Devaki was pregnant for the seventh time, the gods transferred the foetus to the womb of Rohini, the second wife of Vasudeva. Thus Rohini gave birth to Devakee's seventh child. He was named as Balrama.

In due course, Devaki became pregnant for the eighth time. When Kansa came to know this he tightened the security in and outside the prison. He warned his guards, "Be watchful, Devaki's eighth son is said to be the cause of my death. Don't let anyone approach the prison."

It was the month of Bhadrapada. Devaki gave birth to her eighth son. As the child was born, a brilliant light spread throughout the prison. The shackles of Devaki and Vasudeva loosened automatically. All the guards went into deep

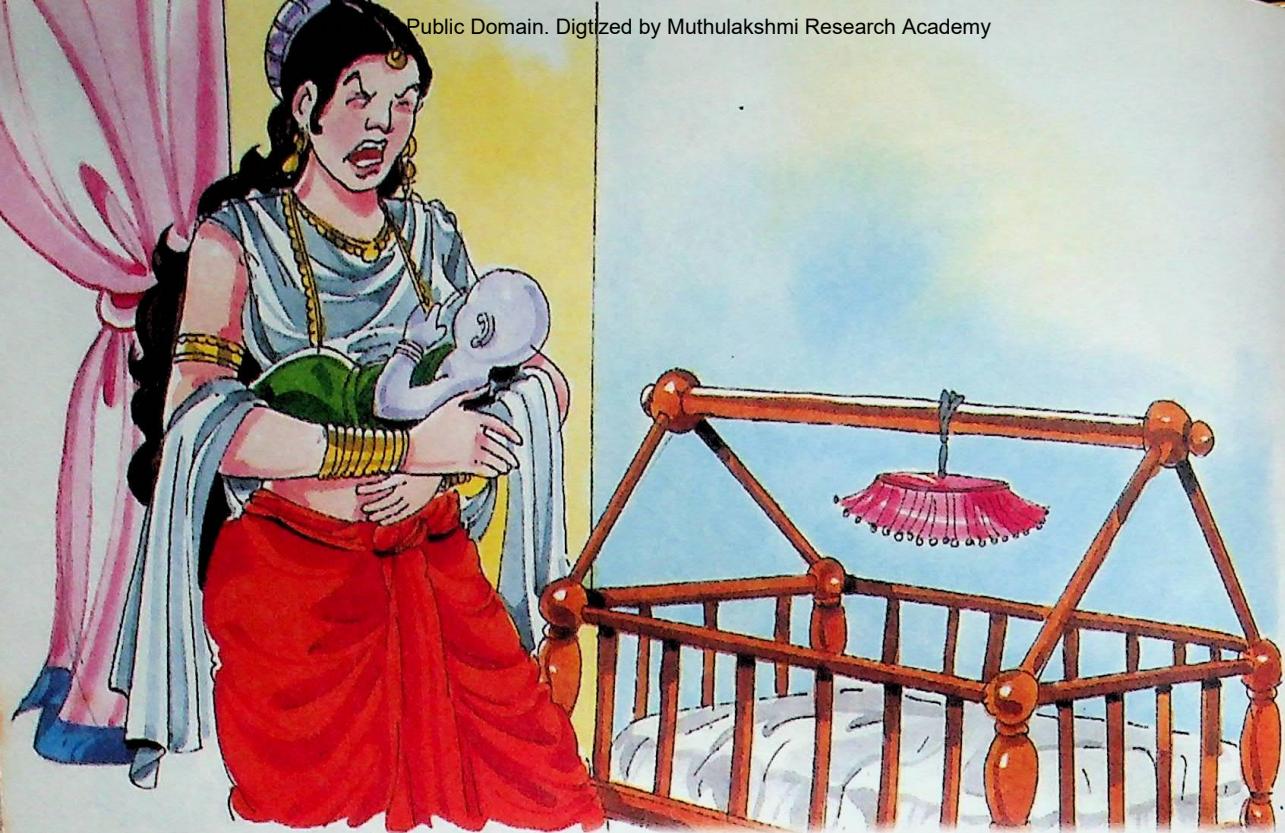




sleep. Right then a celestial voice echoed, "Vasudeva, the gates of the prison are open. Go to Gokul and exchange your son with Nanda's newborn daughter."

Vasudeva put the child in a basket and carrying it on his head came out of prison. Seeing the heavy rain and lighting he got scared. But he mustered the courage and proceeded towards the Yamuna. Vasudeva entered Yamuna which was over flooded but as soon as the Yamuna water touched the feet of the child, its level decreased. Shesha Naga himself became the boy's umbrella. Vasudeva reached Gokul and went straight to Nanda's house and woke him up. Both exchanged the children and Vasudeva came back to the prison.

As soon as Vasudeva entered the prison, the prison got locked itself and the guards woke up. When they



heard the crying of the child they immediately informed Kansa. Kansa immediately reached there and snatched the newborn from Devaki and raised her to smash on the earth. But the baby did not fall down. She disappeared in the sky saying, "Kansa, your death has taken birth. Your end is near."

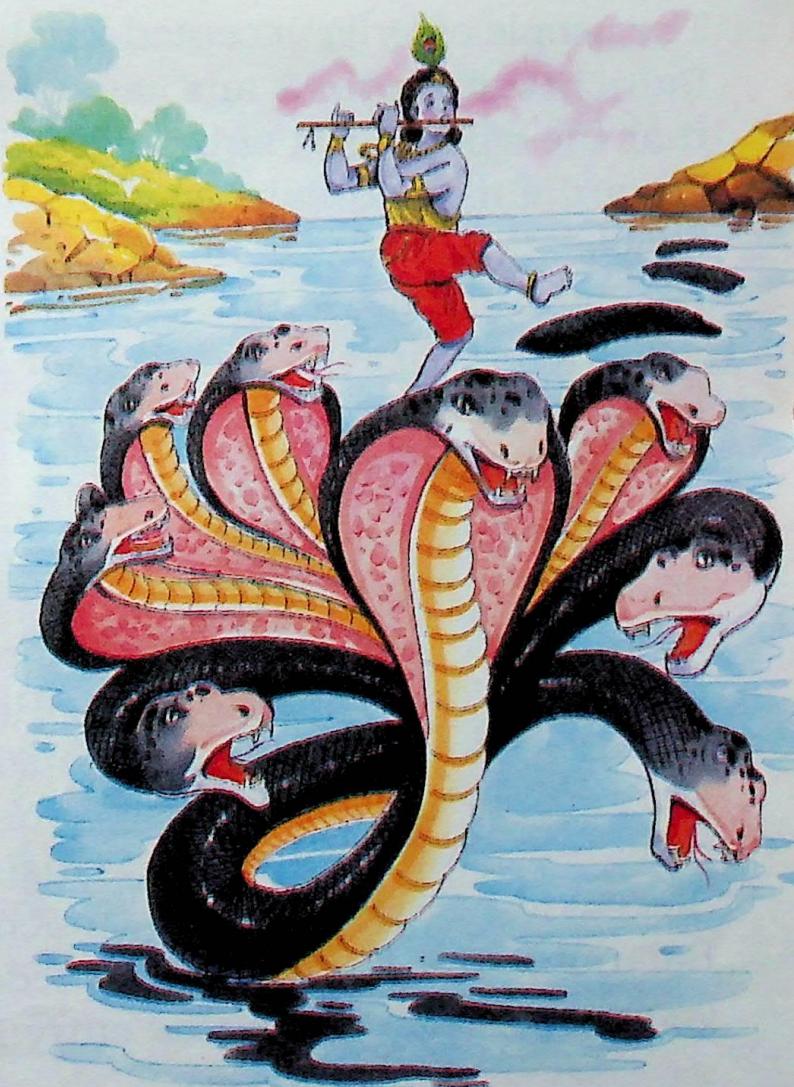
Hearing this Kansa got nervous. He ordered his soldiers to kill all the boys who were born on that day.

In Gokula, Nanda and Yashoda were celebrating their child's birth with great joy. They named the boy Krishna. When Kansa came to know about an extraordinary boy in Gokula. He sent Pootana to kill the boy. Pootana assuming the form of a common milkmaid, reached Yashoda's home. Getting an opportunity she lifted the boy and fed him her poisonous milk. The baby sucked her milk. He kept sucking till Pootana fell on the ground and took her

last breath. Now she had attained her real form. All were surprised to see Pootana. When Kansa got the news of Pootana's death, he was furious. He sent many demons one after another to murder Krishna but to no avail.

When Krishna grew up he would go to graze cows with other Gopas. He had a flute in hand and a crown with a peacock-feather on head. He liked butter very much and would eat all the butter kept in his house. Hearing his flute Gopees would lose their senses and started dancing to its tune.

Once Krishna and his friends were playing with a ball on the bank of the river Yamuna. By chance their ball fell into the river. Krishna jumped into the river to fetch the ball. Kaliya Nag whose poisonous effect had turned Yamuna's water black resided in the river. A boy informed Yashoda and



Nanda. They reached the bank of Yamuna. This news spread soon across the village. Fearing Kaliya, no one went into the river to save Krishna. After some time Krishna came out with the ball standing on the head of Kaliya. All were amazed.

Once Nanda decided to leave Gokula to settle in Vrindavana.

In Brija, God Indra was worshipped every year. Krishna advised the people of Brija to worship the Govardhana mountain instead, which provides food and water to the livestock.

The people of Brija accepted Krishna's advice. Lord Indra became furious and caused such a heavy rain that the whole Brija submerged. Krishna lifted the Govardhana mountain upon his little finger. All the people and cattle took shelter under it. Indra could not harm them. Getting tired he stopped the rain and the people returned to their homes. That day onwards the people of Brija started worshipping Govardhana.

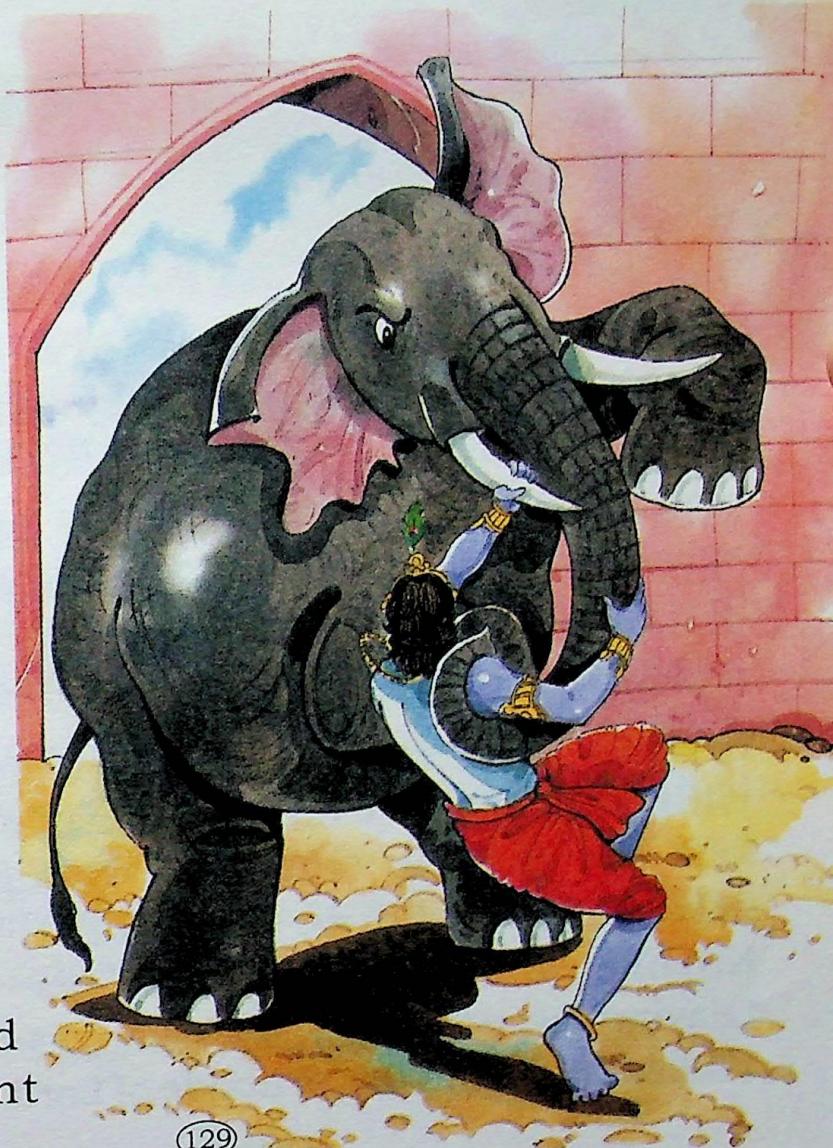
On the other side, in Mathura Kansa was not at peace. He wanted to kill Krishna by all means. He organised a festival and invited Krishna and Balarama to participate in it. Both the brothers reached Mathura. There he treated Kubja a maid of Kansa. She was very ugly since her childhood. Her body parts were unusual, twisted and distracting. She got well only by mere the touch of Krishna. Now Balarama and Krishna proceeded towards the ceremony hall. Right at the entry Kansa had made

an intoxicated elephant stand to kill Krishna and Balarama. As soon as they entered the door the elephant rushed towards them. Krishna gripped the proboscis of the elephant and broke his tusk and made them his weapons. Then Kansa's soldiers attacked Krishna but he marched ahead killing them. He challenged Kansa's two powerful demons Durdanta and Chanoor in wrestling and killed them with the help of Balarama.

Thereafter, Kansa himself pounced on Krishna with his sword to kill him, but he dodged him. He reached near the throne of Kansa. Kansa once again pounced upon Krishna but to no avail.

In this way Krishna caused much trouble to Kansa. At last Krishna caught Kansa by his hair and killed him.

Krishna played an important





role in the Mahabharata. He sided with the Pandavas, and became the charioteer of Arjuna. He showed his enormous form to Arjuna and preached him Gita.

Krishna was also involved in the murder of Jarasandha. It was he who demonstrated Bhima to pull apart the body of Jarasandha into two parts and to throw the parts in opposite directions.

One day, After the war of Mahabharta Krishna was sitting under a tree on the bank of a river. A fowler saw his shaking crown. He thought it to be a peacock and shot an arrow at it. The arrow hit Krishna and he renounced his human body. Leaving human body he again went back to his Vaikuntha Dhama (the abode of Lord Vishnu).

PARSHURAMA INCARNATION



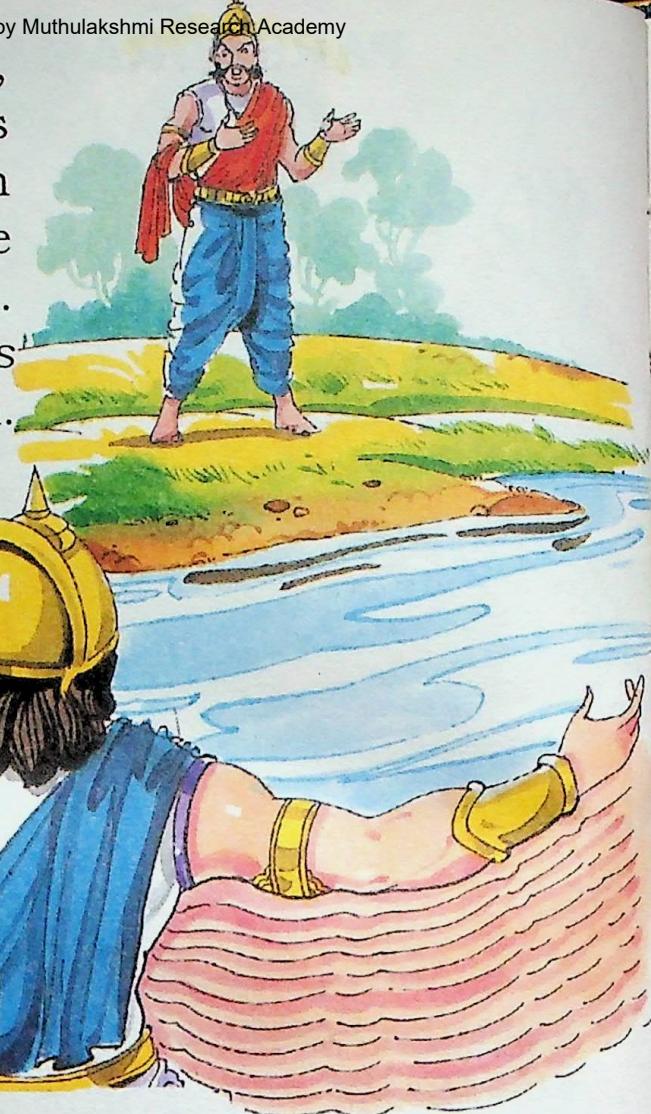
Parshurama is considered to be one of Lord Vishnu's incarnations. He was very ill-tempered, but devout and kind. Maharishi Jamadagni was his father and Renuka was his mother. He was the youngest of his brothers. As the result of his hard *tapasya*, Parshurama availed a place for his father among the *saptarishis*. He also eliminated the *kshatriyas* from the earth for 21 times.

Here is the story how he destroyed *kshatriyas* from the earth. Once the god Dattatreya appeared before Arjuna a *kshatriya* king and said, "I am pleased with your *tapa*, ask for a boon."

Arjuna said, "God, give me thousand arms and I should be so powerful that no one should dare fight with me. I should roam across the earth unhindered. No god, demon or man should kill me. I should achieve all the *siddhis* (divine powers)."

"Amen!", the god said and disappeared.

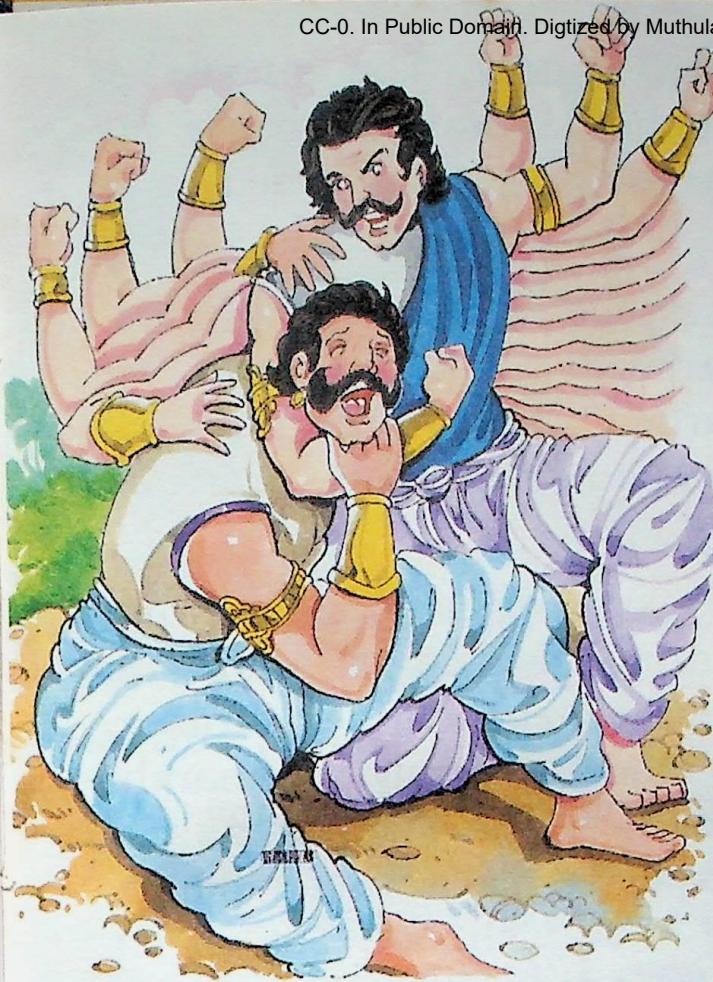
According to the boon, Arjuna got thousand arms and came to be known as Sahastrarjuna. He became unconquerable. He also received *siddhis* and became very proud.



He indulged himself in bad and incorrect tendencies. He considered everyone inferior to him. He would treat brahmins, hermits, and saints with contempt. He had indulged himself in worldly pleasures.

One day, he wore a garland of *Vaijayantee* and went to swim in river water with his queens. With the strength of his thousand arms he stopped the flow of the river Narmada. At the same time Lanka's king Ravana was meditating in a Shiva-temple on the bank of Narmada.

As Sahastrarjuna had stopped the flow of the river, it brought hindrance in his penance. Ravana reached



the place where Sahastrarjuna was standing stopping the flow of the river Narmada. Seeing him do this, Ravana said, "What are you doing? Let the river water flow. My worship gets obstructed due to stoppage of water."

Sahastrarjuna replied, "Then what should I do? Go, and worship somewhere else."

Ravana said, "No, I will worship only on the bank of Narmada. Shiva is my adored deity."

Sahastrarjuna said, "I will take my bath in the same way. I'll also stop the flow of the river. Understood!"

Ravana lost his temper and said, "You don't know who I am. I am Lanka's king Ravana. The whole universe trembles due to my fury. I will punish you for your impudence."

Sahastrarjuna spoke loudly, "Okay! So you are Ravana, but you are not aware of me. I am Sahastrarjuna, the king of Mahishmati. You can't punish me, and I will teach you a lesson."

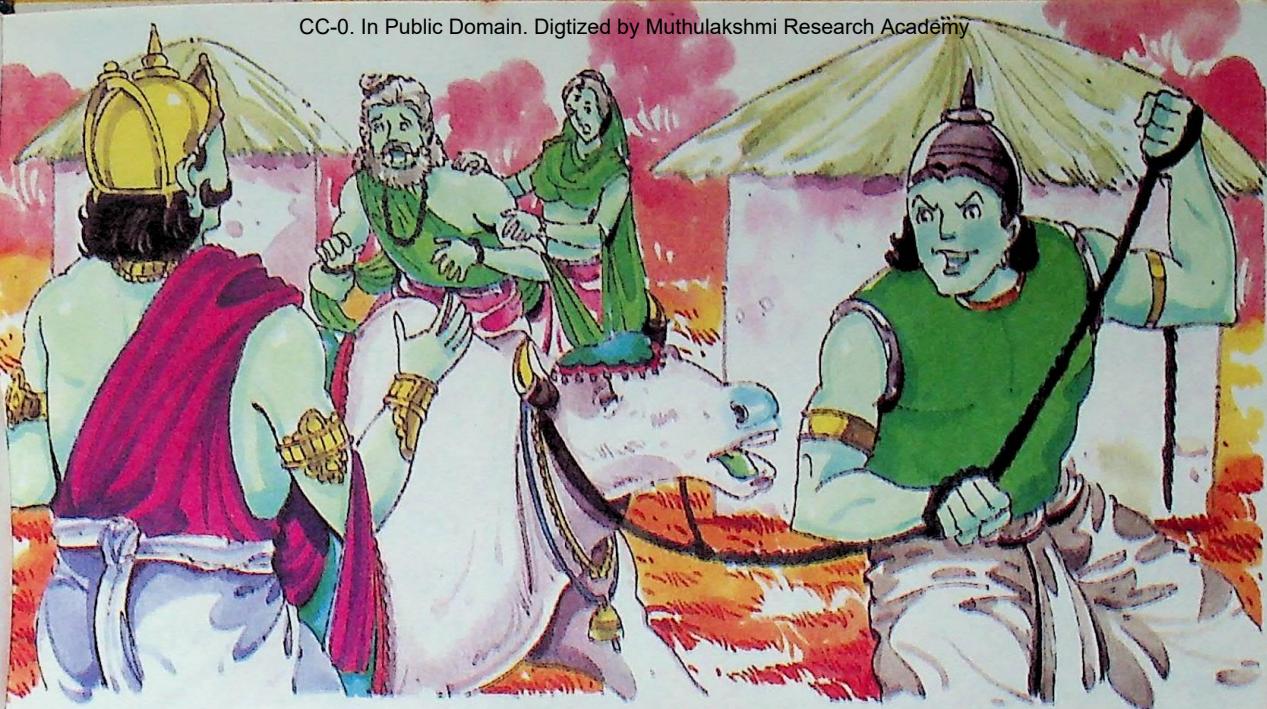
Soon there broke out a fierce war between the two. Sahastrarjuna won the war. He captured Ravana in

his armpit and shouted loudly. The queens of Sahastrarjuna also laughed at Ravana to see his pitiable condition. Ravana's face reddened with shame.

At the same time Maharshi Pulastya reached there. He said to Sahastrarjuna, "Sahastrarjuna set Ravana free, he is a learned brahmin. It is not good for you to insult a learned brahmin." Sahastrarjuna freed Ravana.

One day Sahastrarjuna reached a forest hunting with his soldiers. Maharshi Jamadagni's ashrama was in that forest. When they reached the ashrama, Jamadagni welcomed them warmly. Maharshi Jamadagni introduced himself and asked Sahastrarjuna who he was. Sahastrarjuna told him, "I am Arjuna, the king of Mahishmati. You might have heard my name," Jamadagni said. "Have a rest for a while, till I will arrange food for you." Saying so Jamadagni told his wife Renuka to arrange a feast



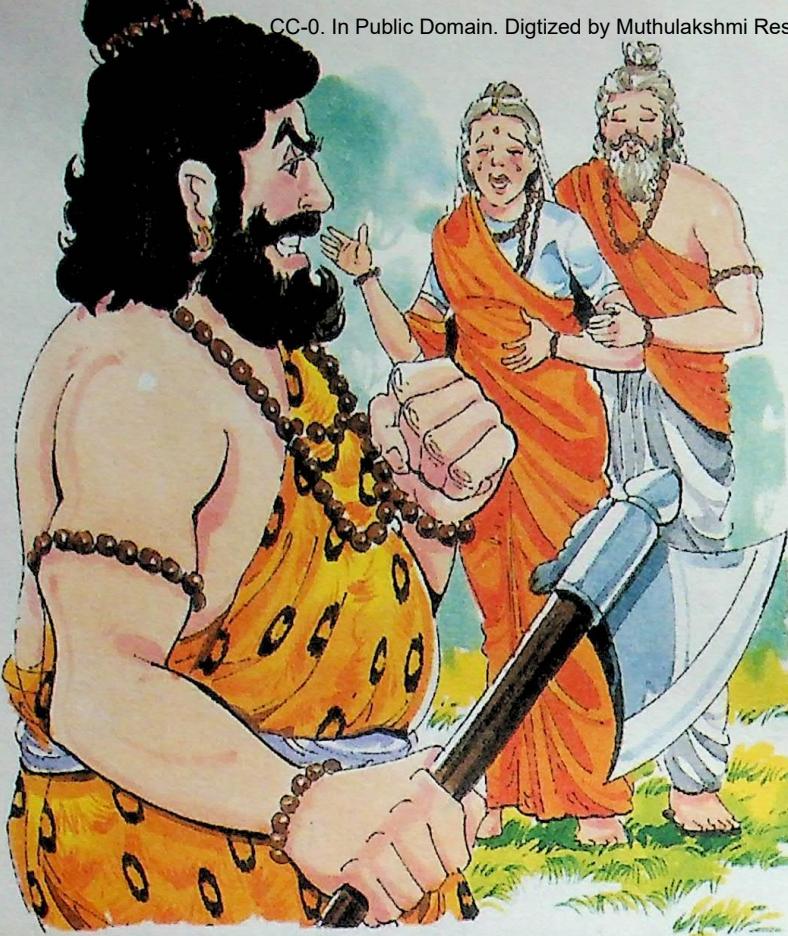


for the guests.

After some time Jamadagni said, "O King! Food is ready. Come, and have your meal." Sahastrarjuna, and his soldiers ate to their fill. They spoke, "Maharshi, your food is very tasty. I want to know how you managed to arrange food for us so soon." Jamadagni said, "King! All this was possible due to our cow Kamadhenu who fulfills all our wishes. Due to her capabilities, all facilities are available in our ashrama."

Hearing it there came a greed in the mind of Sahastrarjuna. He thought, 'Such a miraculous cow should be in my possession and not with this hermit. I will take her to my palace.'

Next day when Sahastrarjuna was leaving he untied the cow without the hermit's permission and took her along. Seeing this Maharshi Jamadagni and his wife Renuka tried a lot to stop Sahastrarjuna, but he did not listen to them. Jamadagni, said. "Take



anything else that you wish but leave my cow.” But Sahastrarjuna didn’t listen to him. When Parshurama, the son of Jamadagni returned home, his mother told him the whole incident.

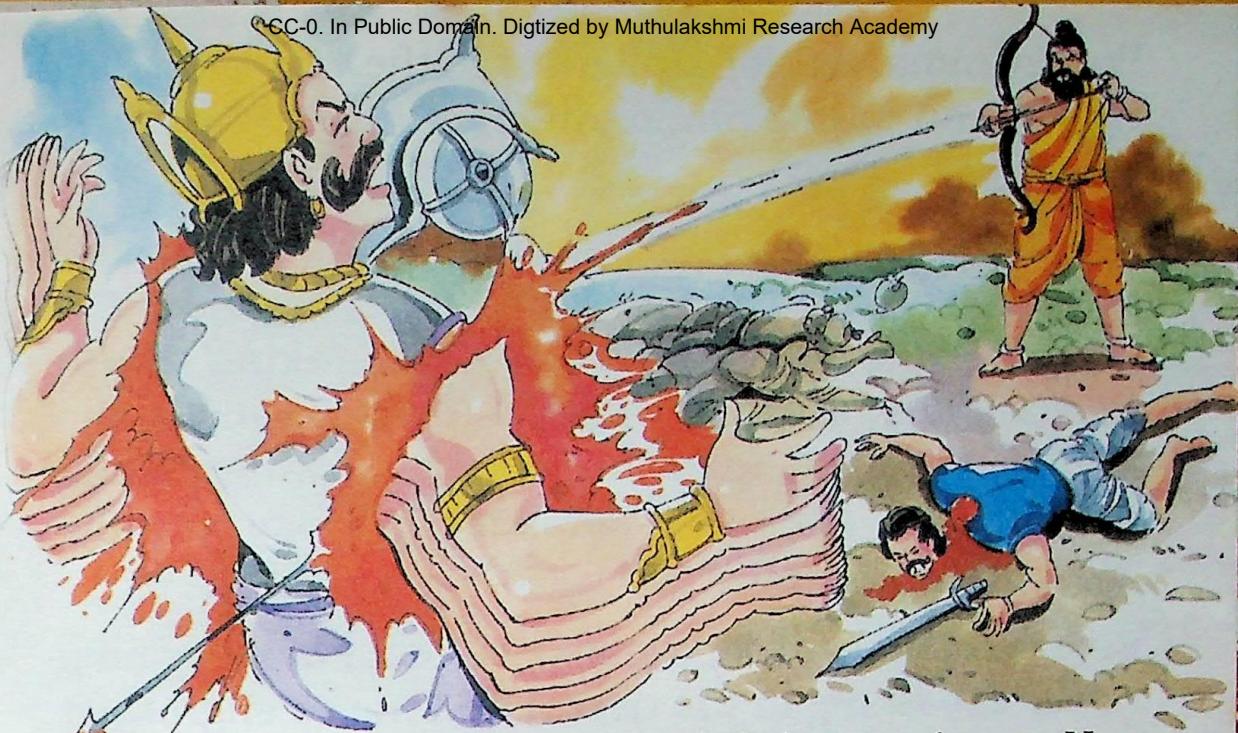
Parashurama frowned and said, “How dare the king take away

our Kamadhenu! You need not worry. I will bring the cow back right now.”

Saying so he took his *parshu*, an axe and a bow and arrow and proceeded towards Mahishmati. On reaching Mahishmati he said to Sahastrarjuna, “Give Kamadhenu back instantly to me, and ask for forgiveness for your crime, else you will have to lose your life.”

Sahastrarjuna spoke, “Go away from here, otherwise you will be killed by me.”

Now Parshurama lost his temper and headed towards Sahastrarjuna with his *parshu*. Seeing so the soldiers of Sahastrarjuna came forward to stop him. Parshurama knocked them down. He destroyed



the 'akshaohinee' army of Sahastrarjuna. Now Sahastrarjuna himself moved ahead to kill Parshurama. Then Parshurama set five arrows together on his bow and shot towards Sahastrarjuna, by which he could cut off all his arms. Sahastrarjuna fell on the ground. Seeing so, his sons fled from the battle field. Then Parshurama shot an arrow at the chest of Sahastrarjuna, which caused his death.

As Sahastrarjuna died his army fled away and Parshurama returned to his ashrama with Kama-dhenu. He informed his father that he had killed Sahastrarjuna. But Jamadagni became sad. He said, "Son, to take away one's life is not a brahmin's duty. Thousands of kshatriyas have been killed by your hands. You will have to repent for this."

Parshurama said, "Father, tell me the way." Jamadagni said, "Go to all the holy places and do penance for your sins."

Parshurama, left for a pilgrimage the very next day. He kept on journeying to different holy places for a long time.

One day Jamadagni told Renuka to bring some water from the river Ganga. When she reached the riverside, she saw a Gandharva King taking a bath with *apsaras*. Renuka watched them playing in the river for a while. She got late in bringing water. When she reached ashrama, Jamadagni spoke angrily, "Why are you so late?"

Renuka said, "Lord, forgive me. Actually, I was watching *apsaras* bathing in the river. I became so engrossed that I forgot the time." Jamadagni asked again, "Okay, just tell me who else was there with *apsaras*?" Renuka said, "A handsome youth was with them."

Hearing this, Jamadagni said, "Now I understand why you got late. You must be watching that youth. As you were interested in another man, you don't deserve to be my wife." Saying so, he asked his sons, "Who among you is a true devotee of your father?" All





his sons were there, but not Parshurama. Jamadagni asked his sons to behead their mother but all his sons refused to do this. When Parshurama reached there Jamadagni said to him, "Behead your mother and brothers." Parshurama beheaded his mother and brothers without wasting any time. Jamadagni said, "Parshurama, obeying my orders you have proved yourself to be my true devotee. I am pleased with you. Now ask for whatever you wish." Parshurama said, "Father, let my mother and brothers relive. I don't wish anything else."

Then Jamadagni revived Renuka and his sons.

One day the sons of Sahastrarjuna surrounded the ashram of Jamadagni. Jamadagni was doing *yajna* then. They attacked from behind and beheaded him and took the head with them to Mahishmati. Renuka wept bitterly seeing her husband dead.

When Parshurama returned to the ashram he saw his father's dead body and his mother weeping

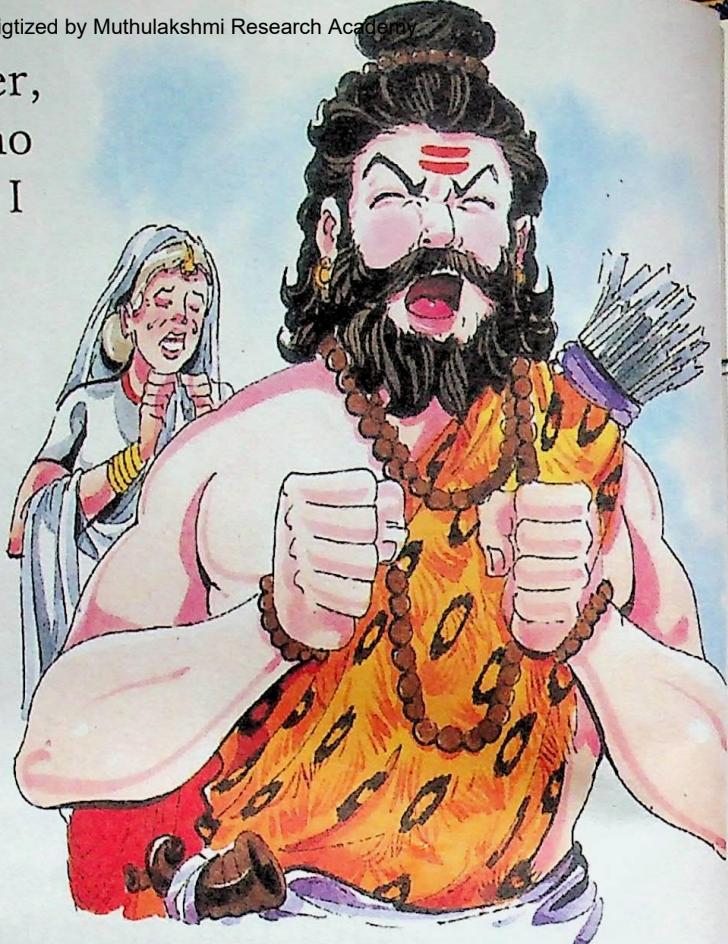
bitterly. He asked her, "Mother, tell me who has killed my father. I will not spare him."

His mother narrated the whole incident, sobbing. On hearing everything,

Parshurama was furious. He vowed, "Mother, as you have told me about father's death many times, I will remove the kshatriyas from this earth as many times. I will not let a single kshatriya live."

With this vow Parshurama set out for Mahishmati, roaring in fury. Sahastrarjuna's sons had got the information beforehand. They had their army ready. Reaching Mahishmati, Parshurama challenged them for a war.

Sahastrarjuna's sons reached with a large army to fight against Parshurama. But none of them could stand before Parshurama. Parshurama killed all the soldiers. Later, he eliminated all the kshatriyas on the earth many times and returned to the ashrama. By the power of his own *tapasya* he got his father alive.



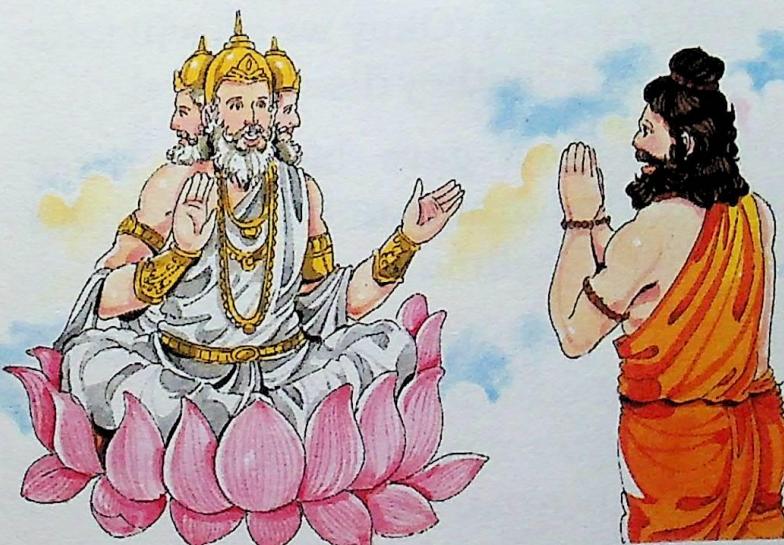
BRAHMA, VISHNU AND MAHESHA BORN AT ATRI'S

There was a hermit named Atri in ancient times. He had attained Mantra power. He abstained from worldly desires and had restrained himself from anger, greed, sloth and jealousy. He remained lost in his *tapasya*. His wife Anasooya was a chaste woman, devoted to her husband.

One day, Lord Brahma came to Atri and said, "Hermit, you should have eligible sons like you, so that they could be helpful in expanding the virtues."

The hermit Atri said, "Pitamaha, we know only to meditate. We get pleasure in this."

Then Atri and his wife Anasooya started to do *tapasya* passionately in the Dandakaranya forest. They were so engrossed in their *tapasya* that they felt no effect of rain, heat, cold, etc. on them. They survived by breathing only. By meditating for years they pleased Brahma, Vishnu,



and Mahesha. So the three gods appeared before them and said, “Atri and Anasooya! We are pleased with your *tapasya*, so we have come to fulfill your wish. Ask us for a boon.”

Atri and Anasooya opened their eyes, listening to gods’ voice. They honoured them by prostrating.

Atri said, “What should I ask you for? I have no worldly desire. Only by seeing you, we got the fruits of our *tapasya*.”

The all three gods said, “Atri, you will have to ask for some boon, otherwise our dignity would be diminished. So, come on, ask for something.”

Atri was caught in a dilemma and looked askance at his wife, Anasooya. Atri, folding his hands together said, “God, I don’t know what to ask for. But if you insist so much, then please allow us to have all of you as our sons. O Pitamaha, perhaps you remember that once you had asked us to have sons. So this boon will be suitable in this respect too.”

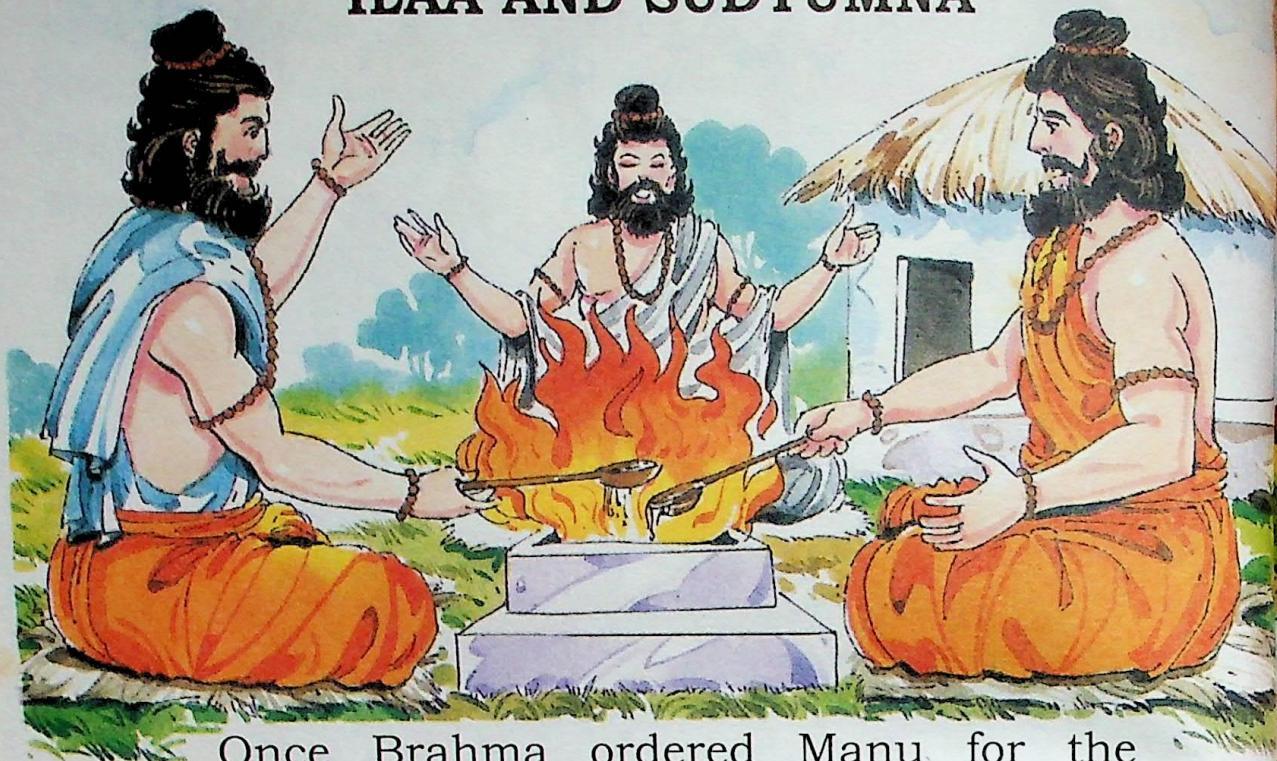
Brahma smiled. All the three gods listened to the request of the hermit and said, “Okay we all will take birth as your sons.” Saying so, they disappeared.

After some years Anasooya gave birth to three children—Dattatreya, Chandrama and Durvasa. All were the forms of Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva.

Being blessed by the three children, they nurtured them and enjoyed their childish acts. Thus the hermit Atri got an important place as a Saptarshi (a group of seven stars) by his *tapasya*.



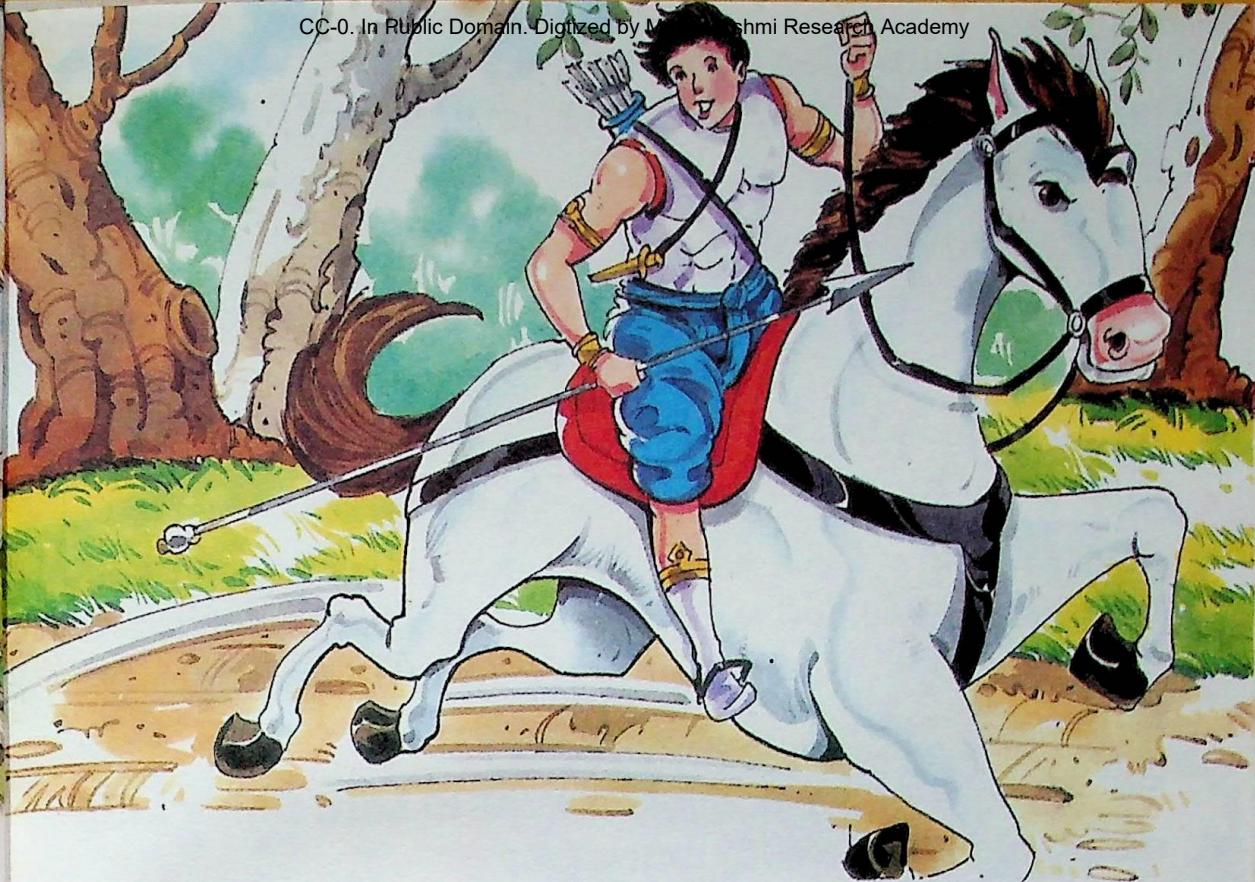
ILAA AND SUDYUMNA



Once Brahma ordered Manu for the development of the human race. But Manu was sad for having no progeny. He told his problem to the hermit Vashishtha, wishing for a solution. The hermit Vashishtha advised for a '*Putreshti-yajna*' to be performed. Manu agreed. Then Vashishtha himself started the *yajna* with some priests.

One day Manu's wife Shraddha spoke to a priest, "I wish to get a daughter from this *yajna*."

Knowing the wish of Shraddha the priest began to chant the mantras for a daughter and put the offerings in the fire. As a result Manu and Shraddha got a daughter instead of a son, who was called Ilaa. Manu was sad with the birth of a girl. He went to Vashishtha and asked him the reason. Maharshi Vashishtha was surprised to know this. He said, "O king, I don't understand how this has happened. There is definitely something wrong." He summoned



all the priests who had performed the *yajna* and asked them about it. They told about uttering of a daughter-wishing mantra. Manu and Vashishtha both were astonished to hear so. Seeing King Manu's sorrow, Vashishatha turned the girl into a boy. He was named Sudyumna by him.

Sudyumna gradually grew up. One day while hunting Sudyumna reached the Shakhana forest where Shiva and Parvati lived. Entry was prohibited there for everyone. Parvati had cursed that if any male entered its boundary, he would turn into a female. Thus, Sudyumna again became a female. He was bewildered by this change and went out of the forest. Budha came across him on the way. He came to know the condition of Sudyumna and married him. Now Sudyumna's name became Ilaa.

After some time Ilaa gave birth to a son. He was named Puroorava who became the founder of the Puru dynasty.

When Sudyumna did not return home for a long time, Manu got worried and looked for him, but in vain.

Finally, he went to Maharshi Vashishtha and told him about his misery.

After thinking for a while Vashishtha said to Manu, "Manu, we must go to Lord Shiva. He is *trikaladarshi* (a seer of past, present, and future). He can help us find Sudyumna."

Then Manu and Vashishtha went to Lord Shiva and asked him where Sudyumna was.

Lord Shiva said, "Sudyumna had reached our Shakhana forest and due to Parvati's curse became a female. He has been named as Ilaa and presently is



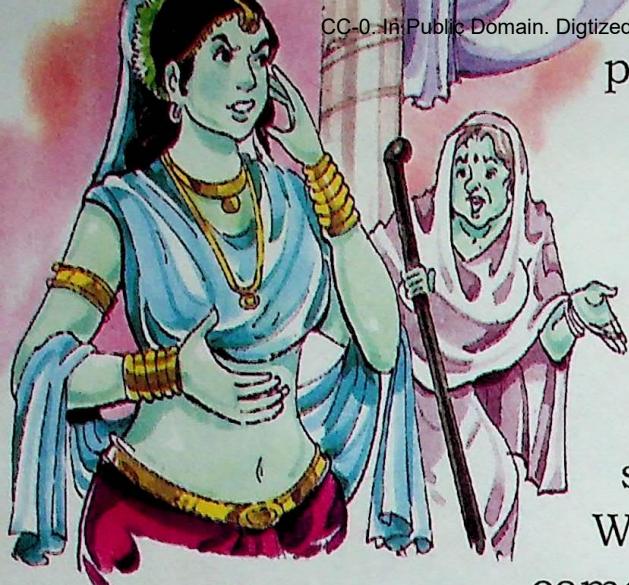
living with Budha.

She has a son also."

Manu and Vashishtha were amazed listening to Lord Shiva.

Vashishtha told Lord Shiva how he had turned Sudyumna into a male despite being born as a female. He then requested Lord Shiva to do something to put an end to Manu's sorrows.

Lord Shiva said, "Rishivara! All this is the work of our creator. We, you, *yajna*, *Shraddha*, etc. are the means only. But I accept your prayer. I will turn Ilaa male again, but he will not remain male forever because of his own deeds. For some reason or the other he will become female again. So being sad is futile. He will live dual life for the rest of his life. Now onwards he will live one month as a male and another month as a female. As a male he will serve Manu's dynasty and as a female he will care for her child belonging to Puru dynasty." Finally, Manu and Vashishtha had to accept this truth about Ilaa and Sudyumna and returned.



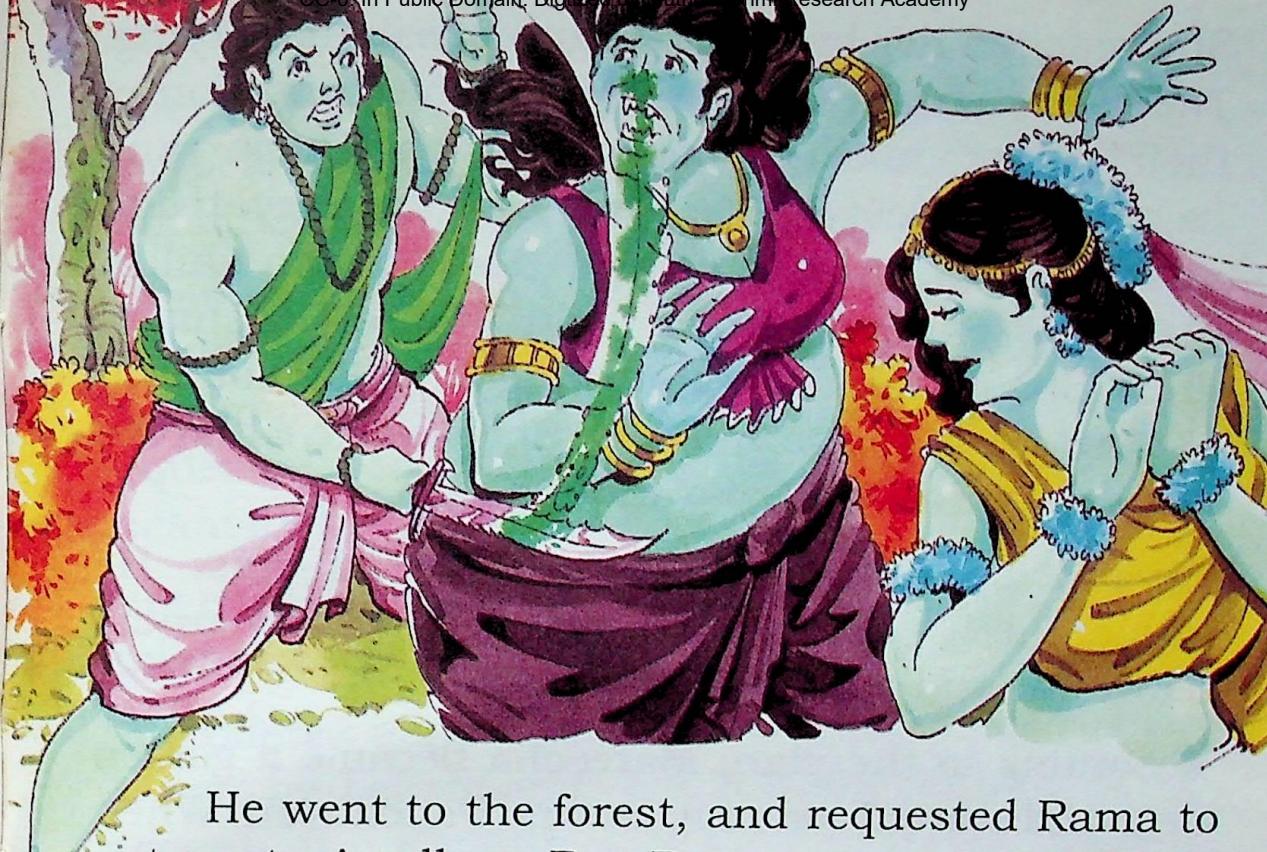
poisoned Kaikeyee's ears, convincing her that her son Bharata was being neglected to be coronated. Queen Kaikeyee got furious and went straight to the *Kopa Bhavana* to show her displeasure.

When king Dasharatha came to know about this, he went there and asked the reason of her unhappiness.

Kaikeyee reminded the king about the two promises he had made to her. First she asked for fourteen years' exile for Rama and the second she demanded Bharata's coronation. King Dasharatha grieved to hear Kaikeyee. But when Rama came to know about mother Kaikeyee's wish, he gladly became ready to go for exile. Younger brother Lakshmana and Sita, also accompanied him. They proceeded towards the forest. Bharata and Shatrughna couldn't know about all this as they were at their maternal grandfather's home.

King Dasharatha could not tolerate separation from Rama and died. When Bharata and Shatrughna heard about their father's death, they returned. Bharata was furious to know his mother Kaikeyee's offense. He refused to sit on the throne.





He went to the forest, and requested Rama to return to Ayodhya. But Rama persuaded Bharata that he would return Ayodhya after the period of exile is over. Further he asked Bharata to take care of state affairs.

But Bharata refused to sit on the throne. He took Rama's *padukas* (footwears) to be put on the throne and rule the country on his name only. Bharata then returned to Ayodhya with the *padukas*.

Soon Rama, Lakshmana and Sita reached the Dandaka forest. They made Panchavati and started living there. One day, Ravana's sister Shoorpanakha reached there. She got attracted towards Rama and Lakshmana. She turned herself into a beautiful woman and proposed to Rama and Lakshmana one by one. But when they refused, she furiously attacked Sita. Then Lakshmana cut off her nose and ears.

She reached her brothers Khara-Dooshana, crying. They were enraged to see the pitiable condition of their sister and rushed to teach Rama and Lakshmana a lesson. They reached Panchavati and attacked them. Rama and Lakshmana killed hundreds of demons along with Khara-Dooshana. Then Shoorpankaha went straight to Ravana and showed her cut nose and ears. She also gave him the news of Khara-Dooshana and Trishara.

Ravana became furious to know all this. He immediately summoned his maternal uncle Mareecha and planned to kidnap Sita.

According to the plan, Mareecha became a golden deer and started roaming around Panchavati. When Sita saw the golden deer, she got charmed by its beauty and insisted on Rama to bring the deer for her. Though reluctant, Rama went after the deer. He appointed Lakshmana to guard Sita. The deer ran



fast and led Rama far away.

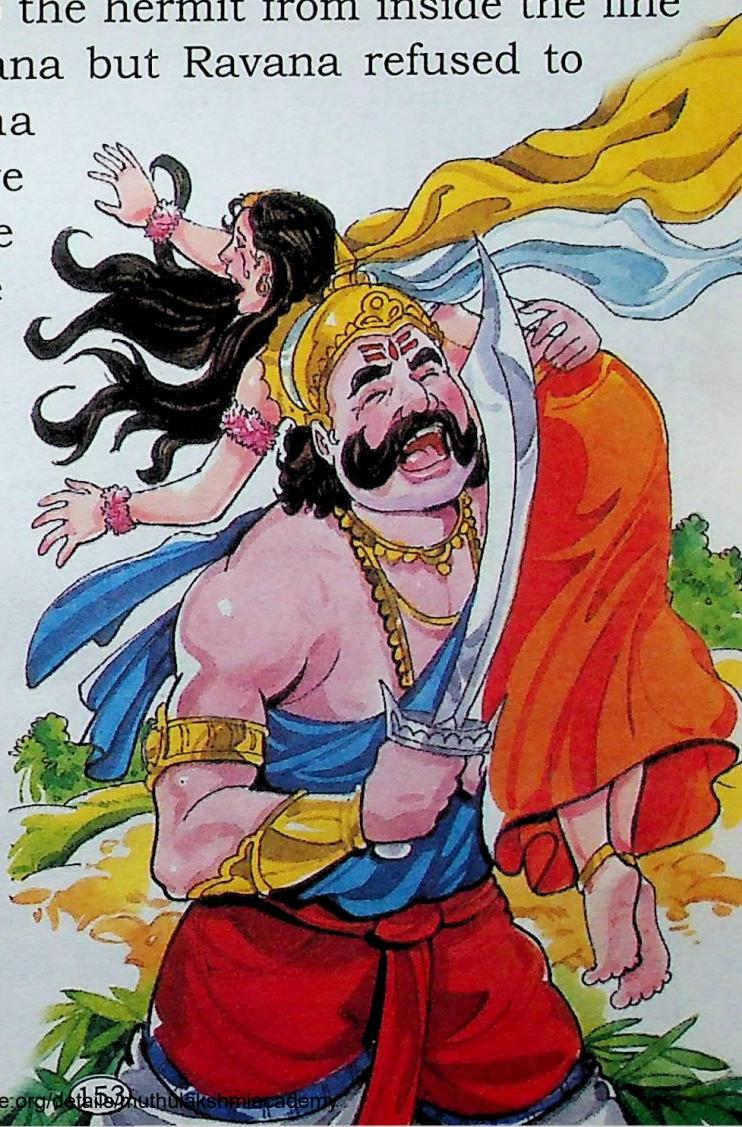
When Rama hit the deer, it came to its original form and before dying it cried aloud imitating the voice of Rama, "O Lakshmana! Help me!"

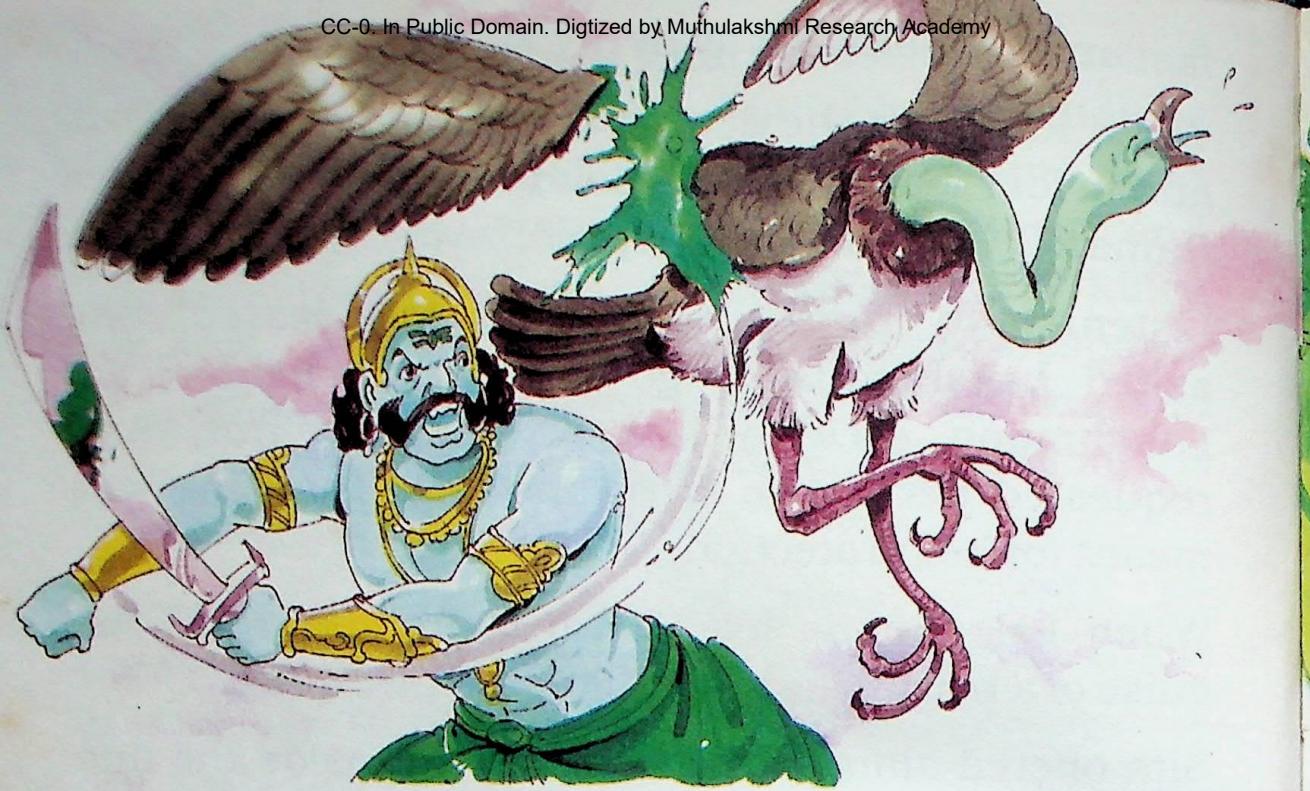
Listening to Rama's voice, Sita was scared! She asked Lakshmana to go for Rama's help. Then Lakshmana drew a line around the hut, and requested her not to cross the line. That line was meant for her protection.

When Lakshmana left, Ravana came there in the guise of a hermit and said, "Mother, give alms."

Sita offered alms to the hermit from inside the line drawn by Lakshmana but Ravana refused to accept it. Ravana asked Sita to give alms from outside the line otherwise he would leave without alms.

Then Sita decided to cross the line to give alms to the hermit. No sooner did Sita cross the line than Ravana came in his real form and forced her in his aircraft that proceeded towards Lanka.





Sita screamed for help. Listening to her call, the vulture king Jatayu came to her rescue and combated with Ravana. Jatayu wounded Ravana severely. But Ravana with his sword cut off his wings and made him fall down on the ground.

On the other hand, when Rama and Lakshmana returned to Panchvati, they were shocked not to find Sita there. They became anguished and roamed about in the forest in search of Sita. They came across wounded Jatayu. He told them that the king of Lanka, Ravana had taken Sita away. Then, they met Hanumana and Sugreeva at the mountain Matanga. Sugreeva, being afraid of his brother Bali had taken shelter on that mountain along with his ministers.

Rama and Sugreeva became friends. Rama killed Sugreeva's brother Bali and made him the king of Kishkindha. In return Sugreeva engaged his



monkeys in search of Sita. One day Hanumana crossed the sea and reached Lanka in search of Sita. He found Sita sitting under a tree in the Ashoka Vatika (garden). Hanumana reached Sita and showed her the ring of Rama, convinced her his being Rama's devotee. Then he plucked fruits and uprooted many trees of Ashoka Vatika.

When Ravana was informed about this, he sent his soldiers to catch Hanumana. Finally Meghanada managed to catch Hanumana and produced him before Ravana in the court.

Ravana wanted to punish Hanumana to death. But Ravana's younger brother Vibheeshana suggested that a messenger should not be killed. He should be punished in some other way.

Ravana after consulting his ministers set Hanumana's tail on fire. Hanumana set whole Lanka on fire with his burning tail. Then he returned with the news of Sita.



Rama decided to attack Lanka to set Sita free. A bridge across the sea was built with the help of monkey army to reach Lanka. Vibheeshana having been insulted by Ravana came in the refuge of Rama.

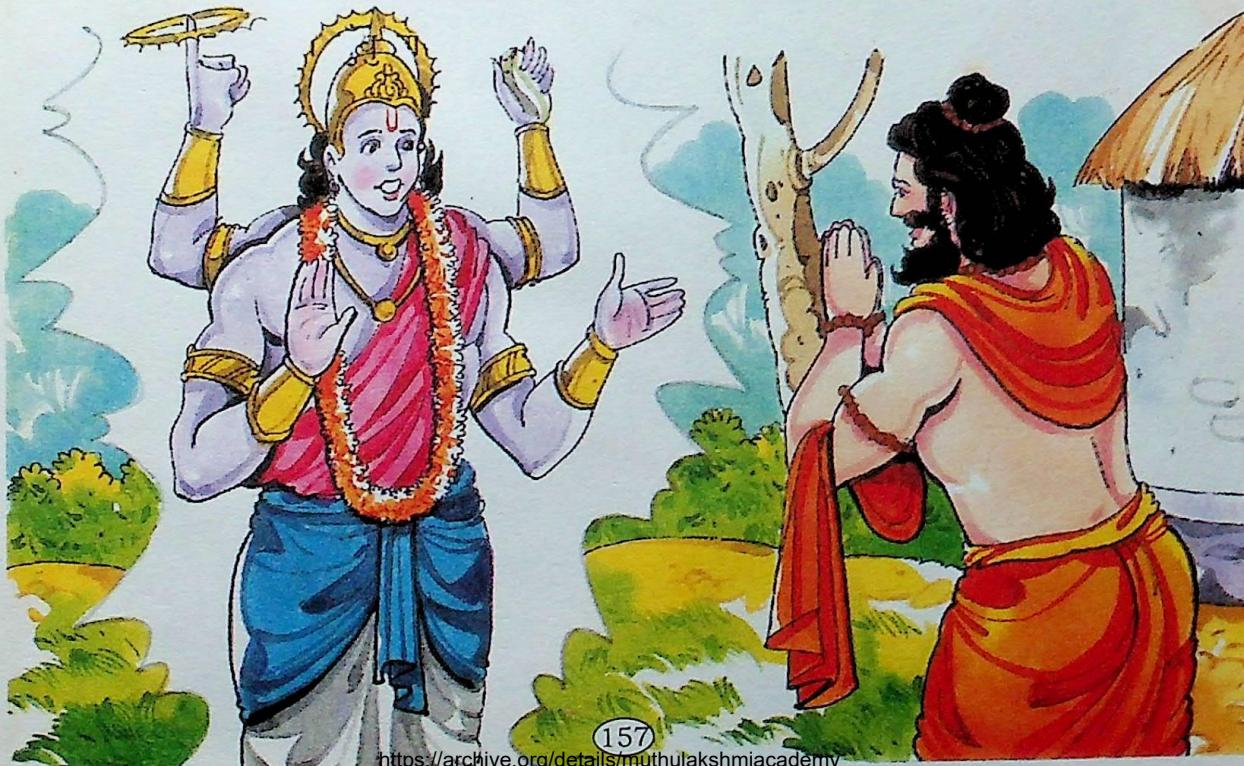
A fierce war was fought between Rama and Ravana. Ravana's army suffered a setback with the killing of Kumbhakarna, and Meghanada. Finally Ravana himself was killed. After killing Ravana Rama crowned Vibheeshana as the king of Lanka. Thereafter, he returned to Ayodhya along with Lakshmana and Sita in the Pushpak aircraft.

DHUNDHU WAS KILLED

In a desert region once there lived a hermit named Uttanka. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. One day being pleased with his devotion Lord Vishnu came to his ashrama and said, "Mahatma, I am pleased with your devotion. Therefore, ask for a boon."

Uttanka's joy knew no bound seeing Lord Vishnu before him. With a great reverence he said, "Lord, I am blessed by seeing you. My *tapasya* has borne fruit. Now I wish nothing else to ask for except that I should always worship you."

Lord Vishnu said, "You have already got this without asking. Now I give you an important work for welfare of the world. Very soon a demon named Dhundhu hidding in this desert will be terribly violent on men, gods, yakshas, etc. All will run for their lives. He is to be caught by the king of the Ikshvaku dynasty. You



will have to pray to the king to find Dhundhu. I myself will kill Dhundhu through the king." Saying so Lord Vishnu disappeared.

After some days the hermit Uttanka saw that a hill-like shape had emerged in the desert. From inside a violent air was flowing out, darkening the whole desert with dust and sand in the air. Earthquakes too occurred there and everything got destroyed. The ashrama of the hermit too was not left untouched during the turbulence. This disturbed him in his *tapasya*.

Then he remembered what Lord Vishnu had told him. He thought,

'Certainly Dhundhu, the demon, is hiding inside this hillock of sand creating storm by shaking his body. He must be killed soon. I will inform the king of Ikshvaku dynasty and get the demon killed as Lord Vishnu had told.' Then Uttanka immediately went to king Brihadashva, the king of the Ikshvaku dynasty

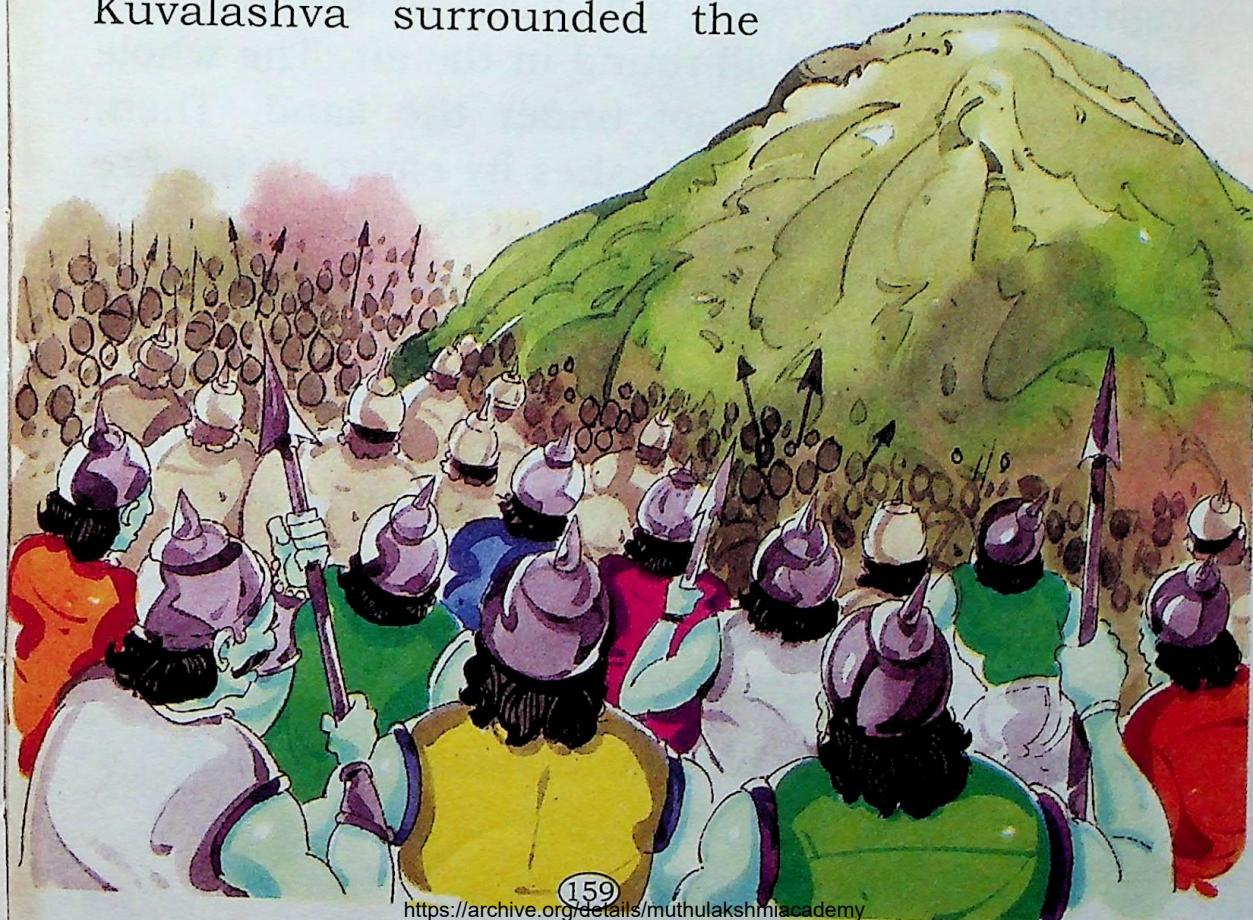


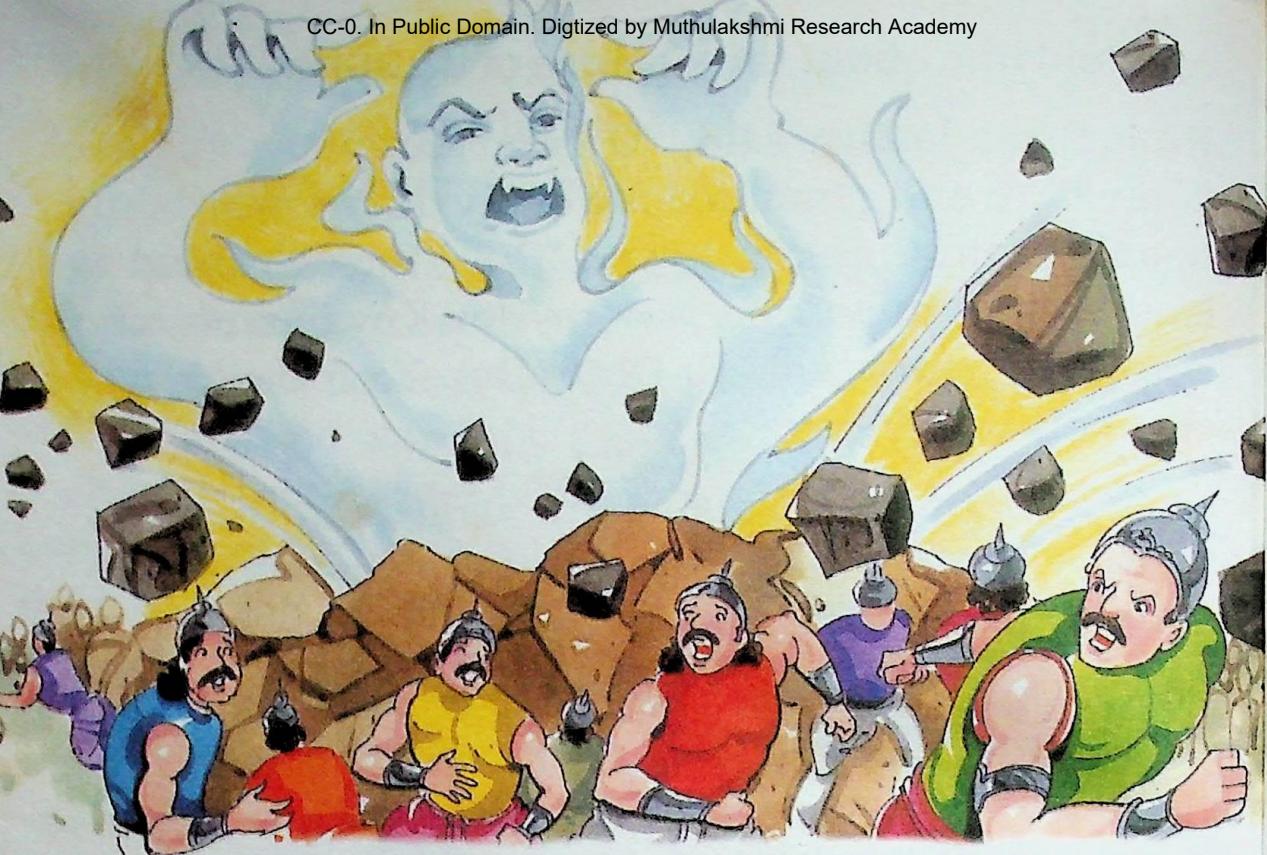
and told him about the violence of Dhundhu.

King Brihadashva said, "O great hermit, you have come here and reminded me of my duty towards my people, I am thankful to you. But I have decided to lead a *vanaprastha* life. Now my son Kuvalashva who is my successor will kill Dhundhu. Your desire will certainly be fulfilled."

Saying so, King Brihadashva called for his son Kuvalashva and asked him to help the hermit by killing Dhundhu.

Kuvalashva said, "Don't worry, O great saint! Bless me for this task." Thereafter, Kuvalashva took the blessings of the hermit Uttanka and his father Brihadashva and reached the place where Dhundhu had built a high hill of sand. The soldiers of Kuvalashva surrounded the



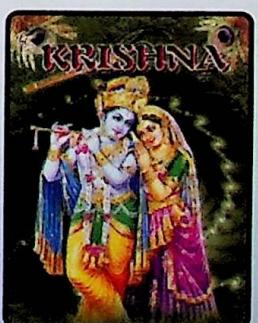
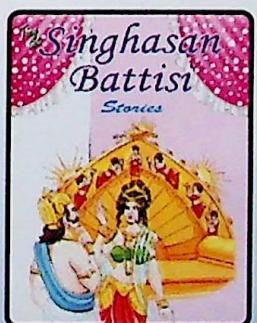
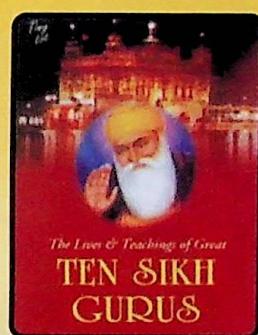
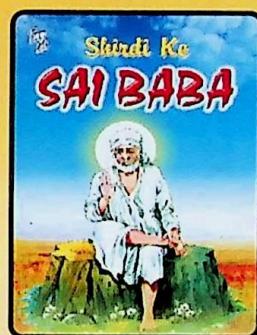
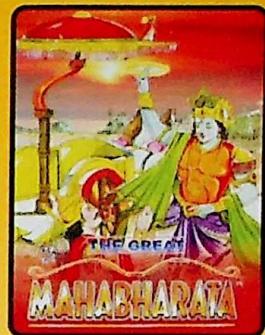
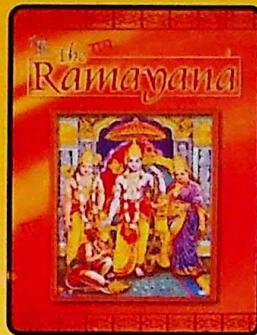


hill and started digging it. Dhundhu with a frightening roar came out from inside the hill scattering the sand all round in the air. The whole army of Kuvalashva got under the sand. Then, Dhundhu burnt them to ashes by emitting the fire from his mouth. Seeing deaths of the soldiers of his army Kuvalashva got extremely furious at Dhundhu. His body began to emit wonderful rays of light as if Lord Vishnu had possessed Kuvalashva body. Then with his yogic power Lord Vishnu as Kuvalashva extinguished the fire and with a divine weapon cut Dhundhu's head off.

After killing Dhundhu Lord Vishnu disappeared from the body of Kuvalashva.

The hermit Uttanka blessed Kuvalashva and left.

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